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# OUR LORD'S RESURRECTION

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## EDITORS' PREFACE

THE object of the Oxford Library of Practical Theology is to supply some carefully considered teaching on matters of Religion to that large body of devout laymen, who desire instruction, but are not attracted by the learned treatises which appeal to the theologian. One of the needs of the time would seem to be, to translate the solid theological learning, of which there is no lack, into the vernacular of everyday practical religion ; and while steering a course between what is called plain teaching on the one hand and erudition on the other, to supply some sound and readable instruction to those who require it, on the subjects included under the common title 'The Christian Religion,' that they may be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear.

The Editors, while not holding themselves precluded from suggesting criticisms, have regarded their proper task as that of editing, and accordingly they have not interfered with the responsibility of each writer for his treatment of his own subject.

W. C. E. N.  
D. S.



# CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
I. THE EVIDENCE OF THE EVANGELISTS TO THE RESUR- RECTION . . . . .	1
II. THE TWO SERIES OF MANIFESTATIONS (JERUSALEM AND GALILEE) . . . . .	43
III. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE THIRD DAY . . . . .	69
IV. THE EMPTY GRAVE . . . . .	81
V. S. PAUL'S PERSONAL EVIDENCE TO THE RESURREC- TION . . . . .	106
VI. S. PAUL'S SUMMARY OF THE EVIDENCE . . . . .	134
VII. SELF-MANIFESTATION OF THE RISEN LORD RESTRICTED TO THE CIRCLE OF DISCIPLESHP . . . . .	144
VIII. THE NATURE OF THE RESURRECTION BODY . . . . .	159
IX. THE ASCENSION . . . . .	180
X. THE DOGMATIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESURRECTION . . . . .	206
XI. JEWISH CONCEPTION OF IMMORTALITY . . . . .	232
XII. THE INFLUENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION ON THE HOPE OF IMMORTALITY . . . . .	263

## CONTENTS

APPENDIX I : PRESUPPOSITIONS . . . . .	PAGE 281
APPENDIX II : THE RELATION BETWEEN RELIGION AND HISTORY . . . . .	293
APPENDIX III : THE BAPTISMAL FORMULA . . . . .	303
APPENDIX IV : BOOKS ON THE RESURRECTION . . . . .	311
INDEX OF SUBJECTS . . . . .	314
INDEX OF BIBLICAL QUOTATIONS . . . . .	317
INDEX OF GENERAL QUOTATIONS . . . . .	319



## CHAPTER I

### THE EVIDENCE OF THE EVANGELISTS TO THE RESURRECTION

THERE are many ways in which a study of the Resurrection may begin. It might begin with the evidence of S. Paul's letters, as being the earliest documentary record we possess. Or it might begin with the Four Evangelists, as containing accounts of the actual event, and, therefore, anterior to S. Paul's evidence, which logically presupposes the event, and is not intelligible without it. Or it might begin with a consideration of the dogmatic value of the facts; for the Resurrection must rightly appeal very differently to the human mind according as it is viewed as an isolated wonder, or as it is recognised as being an integral part in a systematic theory of Redemption. Or it might begin with the presuppositions conducive to faith and those which hinder it. Each of these distinct lines of study has its advantages, and will probably commend itself to special types of mind. The method here chosen is the second. We would

begin with the evidence of the Evangelists as a whole ; grouping together their statements and condensing them in one view, endeavouring to understand their principles, and the purposes which, in their estimation, the Resurrection-appearances were intended to serve. Incidentally we would note the delicate touches and details which indicate the objective reality of the recorded scenes and words, attempting to ascertain the extent to which the utterances assigned to Jesus Christ in the great forty days harmonise with the stage of theological development to which the Evangelists have ascribed them. This method must necessarily involve us in considerable detail and repetition, but such repetition may have its uses as well as its defects. For, after all, a fact of such magnitude as the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead can only be valued aright as it is patiently studied in detail from different if similar points of view.

The Evangelists may be said to ascribe three main purposes to our Lord's reappearing. The first is evidential, the second instructive, the third authoritative. By evidential purpose is meant a desire to convince the Apostles of the fact of His Resurrection. The instructive or prophetic purpose was to prepare them for their subsequent work as teachers. The authoritative purpose was to confer on them a power and a commission. Under one or other of

these three divisions all that they tell us of our Lord's Resurrection and self-manifestation may be included. Before proceeding to consider the evidence of the Evangelists under these three main divisions, it is worth observing that the Resurrection-appearances are constantly undervalued through failure to appreciate the purposes for which our Lord is reported to have appeared. One critic, for instance,<sup>1</sup> professes inability to comprehend the utility of this supplement to the earthly intercourse of Jesus with His disciples. 'We could understand,' he says, 'that Jesus in transitory appearances such as are the best attested, might wish to furnish His disciples, crushed in faith and spirit, with an evidence that He was living still.' Another<sup>2</sup> assures us that the Resurrection was already known as a necessity according to the Scripture. Consequently 'the idea of reducing it to a mere evidential instrument, as if prophetic certainty needed eking out by palpable perception, plainly belongs to the temper of a later time.' The former critic observes again that 'this fellowship of long conversations, such as the Gospels describe, cannot possibly be admitted.' The latter informs us that 'the real object of the interview appointed by the heavenly Christ with His disciples, was that they might receive from Him their mission to take up

<sup>1</sup> Keim.

<sup>2</sup> Martineau.

His Gospel of the Kingdom, and proclaim it to the world until His return. This was the end of His appearing.' Thus, of these two critics, the positive admissions of the one neutralise the negations of the other. But it is obvious that the whole force of such objections to the fact proceeds from failure to realise the many-sidedness of its intention. The critic has laid stress on one or other of the main purposes of our Lord's reappearing to the exclusion of aspects no less important. It is this one-sided, disproportionate view which has rendered the critic incompetent to do justice to the fact before him. Our human nature is, of course, perpetually liable to this defect of narrowing, according to the limitations of our insight, the proportions of some grand reality, and we must ever be on guard against the danger. But when, from the assumptions of a narrowed view an inference is drawn adverse to the facts, it is more than time to be reminded that the aspect ignored would refute the inference. It is not true according to the Evangelists that the risen Master came exclusively to reveal His identity, or exclusively to bestow commission. If we will allow the Evangelists to testify, the purposes of Christ's appearances were certainly three: partly to convince, partly to teach, partly to confer new power upon His followers. A clear perception of the various purposes of our Lord's self-revealing would set the testimony of the Evangelists in a convincing light.



Let us consider, then, the evidential, instructive, and authoritative purposes of our Lord's reappearing.

## I

First, then, the Evangelists ascribe to our Lord's reappearing an evidential purpose. He came in order to convince the disciples that He was risen.

1. And here the most obvious feature is their own complete unpreparedness. According to the Evangelists the Twelve did not in the least expect to see Him again. They adopt a negative, an almost defensive, attitude. They are insensible to probabilities, and impervious to reports. Their Lord prepares them by messages before He reappears among them. A succession of preparatory manifestations occurs before He makes His visible appearance to the Twelve. The announcement of the empty grave, the message of the women, the message of the angels, the visit to the sepulchre, the Emmaus incident—all these take place as preliminaries to Christ's self-revelation in the presence of the Twelve. Thus the Apostles do not conclude from a theory the existence of a fact. They are represented as passing through an educational process and being trained up to the level of belief. They did not expect the Resurrection, as is proved by the simple fact that spices were brought to embalm Him. No one would dream of embalming a body whose immediate

resurrection was expected. The case of S. Thomas is the crowning instance of unpreparedness. It was possible for one Apostle to oppose a resolute resistance to the united conviction of the Ten.

This unpreparedness of the Apostles has appeared in modern times difficult to reconcile with other facts in the evidence.

(1.) For example, while they describe themselves as totally unprepared for the Resurrection, they also tell us that their Lord had predicted it. They record predictions of the Resurrection again and again. They describe Him as almost invariably linking together predictions of His death with predictions of His rising again. They represent Him as indicating this future experience under various forms and similes. Moreover, the opponents of Christ are represented as having better memories than the Apostles. The former not only remember the prediction, but act accordingly. Hence criticism asks, Is it probable that strangers should understand what the intimate circle do not?

The contrast between Apostolic incapacity and unbelieving shrewdness is certainly striking. Yet to do the Apostles justice, it is clear that they had not completely forgotten. When the two on the road to Emmaus observe, 'And beside all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done,'<sup>1</sup> that ex-

<sup>1</sup> S. Luke xxiv. 21.

pression, the third day, is evidently based upon the Master's prediction. His prediction had some influence. And that it had not more is psychologically natural enough, if we remember the crushing effect of the Saviour's Death. The Death of Christ is to us perfectly intelligible, because understood in its redemptive significance. But to the mind of the Twelve the Death of Christ must have seemed the irretrievable ruin of all their hopes, the irreversible refutation of all His Messianic claims. A Dead Christ was indisputably not the Christ at all. According to their view the Messiah could not die. They might indeed remember His words, His promise that He gave; but His words must have seemed refuted by the stubborn evidence of facts. They could not for the moment believe that the cause of Jesus could possibly survive the overwhelming refutation inflicted by His Death. Bewildered and thrown into entire intellectual and emotional confusion, they were capable of faint-hearted allusions to 'the third day since these things were done'; but they were not capable of anything like living faith or real conviction, and still less of action on the basis of His words.

That the opponents of our Lord were more sagacious from a worldly point of view, and remembered the prediction, 'After three days I will rise again,' and not only remembered, but acted

upon it, is after all not wonderful. They had not passed through an overwhelming intellectual crisis. They were much cleverer men than the disciples from Galilee. They were shrewd, far-sighted, highly trained, experienced in men and manners. They included in their ranks at any rate some of the ablest men of the city. To act upon the prediction involved, in their case, no reconstruction of their intellectual principles, no belief in the validity of Christ's utterances. It was simply the obvious precaution of worldly shrewdness against possible credulity. It was an occasion, not the only one on record, if one of the most impressive, when a man's enemies proved more capable than his adherents. It was an illustration of the principle that 'the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.'

Accordingly, there is nothing inconsistent between our Lord's prediction of His Resurrection and the disciples' unpreparedness to believe in it.

(2.) Then again, what the disciples say of their own unpreparedness appears difficult to reconcile with their statement about the empty grave.<sup>1</sup> Surely, it is urged, if the grave was really vacant as the Evangelists assert, the fact ought to have been highly suggestive of Resurrection. Yet, according to the narrative, they contemplate the empty grave with

<sup>1</sup> This subject is considered at length in Chapter iv.

unintelligent eyes. According to the Evangelists' unanimous testimony, it was not the empty grave which awakened the Resurrection joy. The women who saw the fact said nothing about it. S. Mary Magdalene inferred only that the gardener must have taken the body away. S. Peter 'departed wondering.'<sup>1</sup> Only S. John, of all the Apostles, appears to have reached the true solution, and he apparently with silence and reserve. If then the grave was empty, why were the Apostles so completely unprepared? Yet, after all, does this incapacity to put the true construction on the facts militate against probability? Is it psychologically incredible? On the contrary. Nothing could be more true to all we know of their antecedents. Look back across the ministry. There are men who interpret history with the rapidity and intuition of genius; men whose power to explain the significance of things confronting them is, to use a modern expression, phenomenal. That was not the case with the Twelve. It has been said of certain persons that they atoned for mediocrity by receptiveness. It is certainly true that the Apostles had receptive rather than creative natures. They were incompetent to interpret the facts confronting them, but they possessed the invaluable faculty of describing what they saw. They could not

<sup>1</sup> S. Luke xxiv. 12.

discover meanings, but they could receive impressions. Watch them all through their companionship with their Lord. Is it not true to say that our Lord is perpetually struggling with their dullness and incapacity? They dwell in the region of the commonplace. They are perpetually imposing the most prosaic meaning on the loftiest of His utterances, and when He speaks of 'the leaven of the Pharisees,' they only think of bread. If they stared unintelligently at the vacant grave, it was only another instance of that powerlessness to discern which had been from the first days of their discipleship their leading characteristic. While recording the fact of their incompetence they give unconscious evidence to their own veracity.

Consequently, the fact of the empty grave does not in the least render the Apostolic unpreparedness improbable.

2. If one leading feature of the narrative is their unpreparedness, another is its originality. Remark especially their description of the resurrection Body. Let it be remembered that they had no analogies to help and guide them. Belief in a Resurrection was certainly common at this period among the Jews; the sisters of Lazarus believed in a general resurrection at the last day: but that was a far-off event, of which no example had as yet occurred. They believed also in the possibility of temporarily resuming life, under the same conditions as before; but this mere resuscita-



tion and resumption of the former earthly career is emphatically not what they have described in the case of Jesus Christ. They have depicted a condition neither purely material nor purely spiritual. They have described a state which is the modern critic's despair.<sup>1</sup> It is not material enough to harmonise with the notion of mere continuance. It is not spiritual enough to belong entirely to a higher world. Accordingly, this unaccountable blending of two worlds must be separated into its component parts if it is to be fitted into the categories of negative criticism. It is suggested therefore that the Gospel writers have confused two irreconcilable views, the naturalistic and the spiritualistic, of the Resurrection body, one false, the other true; and that we may ignore the materialistic element in S. Luke so long as we adhere to the spiritualistic theories of S. Paul. But the truth is that the difficulty is due to the very originality of the conception. Remember that the reappearing of Christ was primarily for evidential purposes. There are only three possibilities in the manner of appearing. Either it must be purely material, or purely spiritual, or a mixture of both. If purely material, it would convey an inadequate and erroneous impression of the future state, as will generally be admitted. If purely spiritual, it would probably fail to achieve its purpose. For if the risen Lord had

<sup>1</sup> Wernle, *Beginnings of Christianity*, i. 8.

stood as a mere intangible shadow through which the disciples could have walked, would the belief in His Resurrection have been possible? Would not an impalpable vision have confirmed their first opinion, when they were terrified and affrighted, and thought they saw a spirit? Consequently the self-manifestation combines both kinds, with the result that it suggests identity and yet change. The impression produced is that He is the same yet mysteriously glorified; that is to say, a double impression. And it is difficult to understand how this double impression could have been produced in any other way. If therefore the evidential purpose of the appearing is borne in mind, together with the mental capacities and Jewish training of the disciples, the peculiar appropriateness of this special form of manifestation becomes impressively clear. And surely the needs of the Apostles would be the primary consideration, rather than the critical demands of the twentieth century afterwards. For if their needs were not met and satisfied, belief in the Resurrection would not have arisen at all. And for the needs of the Apostles, nothing could be more singularly appropriate than what is recorded to have occurred. But the point lies in the originality of the description.

Indeed if we study the whole series of manifestations of the risen Lord, there appears to be indicated a gradual decrease of materiality and a corresponding

increase of spirituality, growing obviously in proportion as the evidential purpose becomes achieved. The self-manifestations of the risen Lord fall naturally into two classes suggested by locality. There is the Jerusalem series, which takes place first, and there is the subsequent series of Galilæan appearances. And it seems true to fact to say, that the material element predominates in the former and the spiritual in the latter. Take first the Jerusalem series. When Mary Magdalene sees Him first of all, she knows Him by His pronounciation of her name. There is a certain slowness of recognition, due to whatever cause, for she fails to know the voice, but there is no suggestion that when once she turned herself and saw Him, she found Him other in appearance than of old. She attempted to hold Him by the feet. It is not recorded that He departed, but rather that He sent her away. The suggestions are material rather than spiritual. And this is true to a considerable extent of all the Jerusalem series of manifestations. To this earlier series belongs the appeal to His bodily solidity, 'Handle Me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have.'<sup>1</sup> To the same period belongs the taking of food before them, and the offer to S. Thomas.

But in the later, the Galilæan series of manifestations, the spiritual element predominates over the

<sup>1</sup> S. Luke xxiv. 39.

material. Recognition has become not more easy, but more difficult. This seems at first sight strange. One would expect the recurrence of His appearances to facilitate recognition. But it is not so. S. Matthew records that 'the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him: *but some doubted.*'<sup>1</sup> He has evidently become more unearthly than before, and the difficulties of recognition are increased.

In the last of the Galilæan series, this difficulty of recognition becomes still more impressively increased. 'When the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.'<sup>2</sup> Not one of them at first is able to discern and identify, although they have seen Him collectively twice before since He rose from the dead. He speaks, yet none distinguishes the voice. And only after the miracle it flashes upon the mind of S. John, and only of S. John, that 'It is the Lord!' S. Peter accepts S. John's assertion rather than trust his own discernment—'when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord'—he acts accordingly. Then afterwards the strange sentence is written, 'And none of the disciples durst ask Him, Who art Thou? knowing that it was the Lord.' This can only mean that their conviction of His personal identity was disturbed by a sense of

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. xxviii. 16, 17.

<sup>2</sup> S. John xxi. 4.

His dissimilarity, that is to say, His unearthliness—the solution being, surely, that the risen Lord is making fresh demands on their intellect. He is instructing them in the unearthly glory of His risen state. He is disengaging their minds from purely materialistic conceptions, which were natural to their Hebrew training, and which He Himself was previously compelled in a sense to encourage, when, to demonstrate His identity, He took food and ate before them. But now the distance and difference between Himself and them is deliberately increased. Recognition is made intentionally more difficult. They have to concentrate upon Him all their attention with all the spiritual force which they possess; and even then they can scarcely apprehend this wondrous phenomenon of the higher world. It is useless now to attempt to hold Him by the feet; they must apprehend Him by the spirit, if they would not let Him go.

Thus there are no real contradictions in this partly material, partly spiritual description of our Lord's Resurrection. It is the uniqueness of evidential appearances, never shown before nor since, which makes the record hard to understand. But, the more we study it, the more luminous it becomes as a wondrous process of evidential self-manifestation. But once again the point is the impressive originality of all this. They had no previous examples to suggest and to guide. There was nothing whatever on which

they could fall back, no facts on which imagination might work.

3. Another remarkable characteristic of the narrative is the individuality in the process by which the separate Apostles came to believe in the Resurrection. Take the case of S. Peter and S. John. We have, I suppose, the clearest conception of the nature and temperament of these two leaders among the Twelve. The one is a warm-hearted, impulsive, energetic man, foremost in action, but behindhand in reflection. The other, silent, observant, retentive, a man of reflection and of thought; in many ways the striking antithesis to his more obtrusive companion. Recall the process by which they came to believe in the Resurrection. S. Mary Magdalene informs S. Peter and S. John that the grave is empty. 'Peter therefore went forth and that other disciple'<sup>1</sup>—suggestive that Peter here, as always, took the lead in promptness of action. 'So they ran both together'; but S. Peter is soon distanced by the energy of youth, and S. John reaches the sepulchre first. Having reached it, he pauses outside with instinctive delicacy, as one who treads the verge of sacred ground. Bending down, he catches sight of the graveclothes in which the body had been folded with the spices. By this time S. Peter arrives, and, with eager impulse equally characteristic, pushes past the bending form of S. John and

<sup>1</sup> S. John xx. 3.



enters in. Then he gazes intently upon the raiment of the Dead, detects the cloth once wrapped about the Sacred Head, not flung disordered in a heap, but 'wrapped together in a place by itself.' Thereupon S. John also enters in. Then the equally characteristic conclusion is reached. Of S. Peter it is written, 'He departed wondering.' Of the other, 'He saw and believed.' Contemplation issuing in wonder, and contemplation issuing in faith. The facts they contemplate are the same, the construction placed on them is different. To the mind of S. John the graveclothes speak. Was it a hint of calm, deliberate composure, so like his Lord? Or was it a suggestion that here the Lord had laid aside for ever the last traces of mortality? Or was it that the orderly vesture of the grave proclaimed in silent eloquence that the spiritual body had passed through, as light might pass leaving the folds and outline undisturbed? <sup>1</sup> Whether it was one or all of these, or other thoughts which we are slow to reach, at least in the mind of S. John the great conviction grew, and faith in the Resurrection began to be awakened.<sup>2</sup> Possibly faith only began to be awakened; for he adds in an explanatory way, that they did not yet understand the Scriptures. He seems to confess that

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Latham, *The Risen Master*; Godet on S. John.

<sup>2</sup> 'L'objet de la croyance ne peut être que le fait de la Résurrection': Calmes, *L'Évangile selon S. J.* p. 449. So S. Chrysostom; on the other hand, S. Augustine thinks differently.



the sight of the empty grave ought not to have been required, and did not fully convey its victorious message. Can anything be more psychologically harmonious with the individuality of these two men? And if we take a deeper view, and say that spiritual discernment depends on inner fidelity, a still more impressive truthfulness of the narrative opens out. For the moral nature of S. Peter cannot yet have recovered equilibrium after the passionate storminess of the triple denial. It is no wonder that he cannot understand; whereas S. John has come from the Cross where he watched his Master die. How significant that the only faithful disciple is the only one to understand! Now the exceeding delicacy and accuracy of this simple spiritual incident, given in a few lines by S. John, bears on the face of it the certificate of its own reality. Assuredly, this is no fiction: it is truth.

Our analysis has been chiefly on the Apostolic side. But a similar analysis might be made on the side of our Lord Himself. The singular identity of character between the Christ of the Ministry and the Christ of the Resurrection is profoundly impressive. He is Himself: the same searching, penetrating, tender, loving yet authoritative personality as before. And this in most inimitable ways. At the same time, the Christ of the Resurrection differs significantly from the Christ of the Ministry. There is more reserve,

more distance in His words and bearing. There is no resumption of the old familiar intercourse. The condescension to almost equal companionship which emboldened S. Peter so far to forget himself as once to take his Lord to task and to venture to rebuke Him—that is past. It is inconceivable that any should dare to do it now. There is the distance of a world between them. He has already entered into His glory. And how true all this is to life, granting the situation! And how impossible to invent! Thus here again the objective reality of it all is brought home to us along another line.

Such then are among the principal features impressed upon the mind by a study of the Evangelists as to the evidential purpose of our Lord's appearances. They are: unpreparedness, originality, individuality. And every one of them produces upon us an impression of objective reality.

## II

The second purpose which the Evangelists ascribe to their risen Lord's appearing, is the instructive or prophetic purpose. He returned among them to teach. Singularly enough, certain modern critics fail to see any necessity for this. What need, they ask, was there to teach? The Apostles already understood. Understood what? Assuredly not what

He now proceeded to teach them. The whole ministry is a long illustration of Apostolic incapacity to understand. They hear and remember His words, but they fail signally to apprehend His meaning. They are profoundly conscious in the retrospect that this was so. 'These things understood not His disciples at the first.'<sup>1</sup> Our Lord Himself repeatedly rebuked their incapacity. 'How is it that ye do not understand?'<sup>2</sup> 'I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.'<sup>3</sup> These were among the latest utterances of His ministry. Nothing, however, can show more plainly their need of further instruction, than their astounding inquiry after He was risen, which we can never read without a sense of amazement, 'Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?'<sup>4</sup> Certainly men whose comprehension was even then so limited, stood profoundly in need of further teaching. Accordingly He returned among them to teach.

And surely, apart from any utterance, the mere fact of His presence, as restored and risen and living in loftier conditions, was full of deepest instruction to the Apostles. It threw whole floods of light across the past. It enabled them to understand His humiliations, and to see that His apparent defeat was real victory. It solved enigmas otherwise

<sup>1</sup> S. John xii. 16.

<sup>2</sup> S. John xvi. 12.

<sup>3</sup> S. Matt. xvi. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Acts i. 6.

insoluble, and put a new construction on what had seemed the refutation of all His claims. It opened out new thoughts of God and of deliverance, new conceptions of the Messiah. It created and justified a revolution in their ideals. Everything that Jesus had spoken during the ministry, of Himself and His work, must have recurred to their minds encircled with wondrous glory, filled with hitherto unimagined significance, as He stood before them on Easter Day.

And the fact is that the amount of instruction given during the great forty days is distinctly impressive. Indeed this element of instruction forms an essential part in every one of the recorded appearances. In no solitary case does our Lord simply appear and vanish away. He invariably enters into living relationship with the individuals to whom He manifests Himself.<sup>1</sup> He gives instruction, He corrects misapprehension. And it is just this which firmly roots the narrative in the region of the real. These are not apparitions, but instructions.

1. Instruction in Holy Scripture is ascribed to these forty days. 'He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself,' on the journey to Emmaus. 'He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures,' in the upper chamber in Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> Thus instruction in the spiritual drift of the prophetic utterances

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Denney, *The Death of Christ*.

<sup>2</sup> S. Luke xxiv. 27, 45.

is said to have occupied some considerable portion of those sacred hours of communion with Him after His Resurrection. The natural inference is that the substance of these instructions is reproduced in the Apostles' subsequent interpretations of Scripture. But the essential point is that their understanding of the prophetic references to Christ is distinctly ascribed to risen instructions, and not to their own private study and reflection.

2. Then, again, He gave them instruction concerning Himself. 'All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth.'<sup>1</sup> This assertion that He, as the victorious Son of Man, is the recipient of all authority in relation to created intelligences, is one which would well appear to the Apostles natural enough from the lips of the risen and glorified Master, but certainly it was not the thought which His humiliation could suggest or His death render conceivable. Thus it comes with peculiar force and appropriateness precisely where the Evangelist places it.

3. Instruction also on the Universality of the Christian Religion is ascribed to these forty days:— 'Ye shall be witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judæa and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.'<sup>2</sup> This remarkable saying describes the extension of Christianity in ever-widen-

<sup>1</sup> S. Matthew xxviii. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Acts i. 8.

ing circles until co-extensive with the human race. The Christian Religion is here contemplated as being first established in the holy city, in Jerusalem; from that innermost circle it is to widen out to the limits of Judæa, the holy people; from the precincts of the Jewish revelation it is to pass on into the realm of the schismatic, the Samaritan; and finally it is to include the uttermost parts of the earth.

Now it is certain that this conception of universality cannot have originated among the disciples at that early date. Their inquiry, to which this saying gives the answer, ‘Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?’ proves that they had not advanced beyond the conception of a national religion. And the immense difficulty which even S. Peter experienced at a considerably later date in broadening his horizon until it embraced every human individual irrespective of Judaism, confirms the view that this instructive utterance must have been imposed on them from without, as it could not at that date have been prompted by their own inner reflections. The universality of the Christian Religion is self-evident, axiomatic to us, but it was anything rather than self-evident to the exclusive-minded Jew.

Recent negative criticism asserts that this utterance ascribed to the risen Christ must have been invented at a later date when the universality of the

new religion became an axiom, and was inserted in early records to explain the origin of this belief. That opinion is inevitable for men who recognise that the Apostles could not have mentioned the universality of the Faith at so early a date as during the great forty days, and who at the same time imagine that the Son of Man could not have been in advance of the mental development of His own disciples.

4. Instruction by Miracle also follows upon the Resurrection :

This time the scene is laid in Galilee.<sup>1</sup> Seven disciples are gathered on the edge of the inland sea. S. Peter is there, and S. Thomas and S. Nathanael, the two sons of Zebedee, and two other of His disciples. S. Peter, taking the initiative as always, proposes a return to their former occupation. They are accordingly fishing once more upon the lake. This return to their trade is by no means inconsistent with certainty that their Lord was risen. S. Paul, even during the absorbing labour of his missions, supported himself by working at his trade, and the Seven of Galilee, in the interval while waiting for further directions, or rather for the completion of the time, are quite naturally represented as doing the same. They spent the night in unproductive toil, but when the morning was advancing, the risen

<sup>1</sup> S. John xxi.



Master stood upon the shore unrecognised. He willed for the time to remain unknown. His call to them across the water, ‘Children, have ye any meat?’<sup>1</sup> is answered in the briefest negative, perhaps by its curtness indicating disappointment, or a tired impatience. The Stranger’s advice to cast the net on the right side of the ship was coupled with the reassuring promise of success. They proceeded to take the hint. Were they moved by His commanding tone, or did they imagine that the Stranger had detected some indications on the water which had escaped their notice? At any rate their obedience was instantly rewarded. In a moment the light net became a heavy burden, ‘and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.’<sup>2</sup> Then the truth flashed in across the mind of S. John. While the thoughts of his companions were absorbed upon the material success, his mind travelled at once to the Giver of the advice.<sup>3</sup> With the certainty of a sudden inspiration, he turned to S. Peter exclaiming, ‘It is the Lord!’ Then S. Peter, exactly true to himself, with impulsive energy threw round him his outer robe, in reverence to the Lord whose sacred presence he would now approach, leaped into the water, and waded to the shore. It has been strangely asked<sup>4</sup> why S. Peter accepted

<sup>1</sup> S. John xxi. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 6.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Loisy, *Le Quatrième Evangile*, p. 931.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

the assertion of S. John rather than look across the water and ascertain for himself. Accordingly the critic imagines some earlier version in which S. Peter made the discovery independently for himself. Such criticism sounds oddly from one<sup>1</sup> who regards the narrative as concerned with the glorification of S. Peter, and written with a desire to please the Roman Church. If the narrative had described what the critic suggests, S. Peter's recognition of Christ independently of S. John, it would surely have enhanced the position of the chief Apostle. But to make him dependent on S. John's superior insight seems to refute beforehand the tendencies and motive recently ascribed to him. And in fact this rapid intuition of the reserved and habitually silent S. John, this comparative spiritual inferiority of S. Peter, are in exact psychological conformity with all that the Gospels reveal about them.

To return to the narrative. The boat was distant some hundred yards from the shore, and was speedily brought to land. The Lord bade them 'bring of the fish which they had now caught.' Then Simon Peter took the lead again. He 'drew the net to land full of great fishes.' They sat down and counted them on the beach. The very number was impressed upon the disciples' memory. It was a hundred and fifty and three. And what also struck

<sup>1</sup> Loisy, *Le Quatrième Évangile*, p. 934.

the fishermen particularly was that 'for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.' There on the shore the Lord was standing, a fire of coals was burning, fish was laid thereon, and bread was there. He invites the fishermen to 'come and dine.' They cannot overcome the sense of strangeness. No one dreams of asking, 'Who art Thou?'<sup>1</sup> for they know that it is the Lord. And yet evidently some mysterious change has passed over Him. He dwells no longer under the same earthly conditions as they. They seem to stand aloof as if afraid. 'Jesus then cometh,' He draws near to them since they venture not to draw near to Him, 'and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.'

We are compelled to consider at some length this Resurrection appearance by the Galilæan Sea, because the instructive value of it to the Apostles depends particularly upon details, and especially upon the comparison of this miracle with the similar occurrence during the ministry recorded by S. Luke.<sup>2</sup>

In S. Luke's account, it was during the early Galilæan ministry that our Lord, while teaching the masses of the people, stood on the border of the lake. Two boats were on the waters; but the fishermen had left them, and were occupied in washing their nets. Christ entered the boat, of which Simon Peter was the owner, requested him to

<sup>1</sup> S. John xxi. 12.

<sup>2</sup> S. Luke v.

‘thrust out a little from the land,’ and thus avoiding the pressure of the crowd, the Master sat down and taught the people from the boat. When His sermon was concluded, our Lord suggested to Simon to ‘launch out into the deep and let down his nets.’ Simon’s answer was that they had ‘toiled all the night and taken nothing,’ but that nevertheless at Christ’s word he would let down the net. This compliance with our Lord’s suggestion had two results; ‘they enclosed a great multitude of fishes, and their net brake.’ They were compelled to ‘beckon to their partners in the other boat to come and help them.’ Both vessels were so heavily laden that they began to sink. Simon Peter knelt at the Master’s knees, exclaiming, ‘Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord,’ and was answered, ‘Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men.’ Then the outcome of the incident is reached in the announcement that ‘when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.’

Now the relationship between these two narratives of S. Luke and S. John must be carefully studied, if the instructive significance of the latter to the Apostles is to be understood. It used to be confidently affirmed in rationalistic interpretations, that this miracle in S. John was nothing more than another version of the miracle in S. Luke, transferred from

the period of the Ministry to that of the Resurrection. Quite recently, however, criticism has expressed its misgivings as to the value of this earlier assertion. The discovery of the apocryphal fragment, known as the Gospel of S. Peter, has helped to deprive the negative assertion of any plausibility. For this ancient fragment concludes with an unmistakable reference to this miracle as occurring after the Resurrection. Accordingly Loisy now maintains exactly the opposite view to that which negative criticism formerly held. He thinks that the miraculous capture of the fish is less appropriate in the third Gospel than in the fourth; that S. Luke depends upon the source from which S. John's account has been derived; that the miraculous narrative is more appropriately connected with the Resurrection of the Saviour and the restoration of S. Peter, than with the vocation to the Apostolate of the chief among the Twelve.<sup>1</sup> While declining to express any assurance that we have the critical ultimatum in such a view, we may utilise his disparagement of the former negative theory. It seems then that, according to an independent recent criticism, S. John's account is no longer regarded as a perversion of S. Luke's.

But, dismissing these critical impressions, let us compare S. Luke's and S. John's accounts together.

<sup>1</sup> Loisy, *Le Quatrième Évangile*, pp. 926-7.

Between these two accounts there are striking similarities, and still more striking differences: similarities, for the place is the same, the chief figures are the same, the experience of a night of unproductive labour is the same, and the result in the miraculous capture is the same. But then the differences are most remarkable. For here, in S. John, it was when the morning broke; there, in S. Luke, in the later morning after instruction given to the people: here it was evidently in an isolated place; there among the crowd by the sea: here the Lord is described as standing on the shore; there as being with them in the boat to avoid the pressure of the throng: here they did not know Him until S. John proclaimed His identity; there no question of such a kind could possibly arise: here He calls from the shore, bidding them cast the net on the right side of the boat; there, while in the boat, He bids them launch out into the deep: here S. Peter leaps into the sea to find his Lord upon the shore; there he kneels in the boat at Jesus' feet, saying, 'Depart from me': here it is expressly said that the net remained unbroken; there its breaking is no less explicitly asserted: here the fish are expressly brought to land and expressly numbered; there no further mention of them is made: here the result is increased assurance of the Resurrection, invitation to dine with Him, and the reception of further instruction and of gifts; there



they make the resolve to leave their trade and follow Him : here everything finally culminates in S. Peter's restoration to his forfeited position ; there in his vocation to discipleship and the promise that henceforth he should catch men. Thus the differences are more pronounced than the similarities. Nevertheless it is on the background of the similarities that the real value of the differences is understood. If only we will admit that the occurrences of striking similarities between various portions of the redemptive Life is natural, much will immediately become clear. Why should not our Lord have deliberately reproduced an experience of the older time with deliberate dissimilarities, as an instrument of very impressive instruction ? Grant that S. Luke's account and S. John's are alike historic, the similarities and the differences become eloquent with suggestive significances, which the Apostles could hardly fail to understand. The similarity of the two miracles must have deeply impressed them. The second recalled the first, and was intended to do so. The two must of necessity have been compared and contrasted together. Here in the former days, precisely on these very waters, when they clustered round the Son of Man, He had worked this same mighty deed. And now in His Resurrection-state He does the same thing over again. But here He stands upon the shore and not upon the water ; belonging to the other world, yet seen on



the confines of this ; directing their labours as before and crowning their toil ; formerly in the natural body, now with the spiritual ; formerly before He died, now after that dread experience ; but just as real, living, energetic, powerful, true, and much more glorious. Such were among the obvious suggestions which the repeated miracle set before them. No merely new and unexampled wonder could so fully, richly, and in such many-sided ways, have taught them conceptions of identity yet superiority, of distance yet nearness, of sympathy and of power. It is in the very fact of its comparative sameness and repetition that its instructive value for the seven witnesses consists. And we should be pathetically dull and blind to lose all this, and to confuse in one monotonous identity the delicate and significant differences of this wondrous scene. There is something most impressive in the peculiar mingling of the prosaic with the sublime, the glory of the risen Lord with the matter-of-fact details about the coals and the fire and food. This settling down to the numerical calculation of the fish, taken at the bidding of a supernatural Visitant, gives just that sobering balance, that touch of solidity and earthliness needed to enable the men to contemplate with calmness the divine event in which they found themselves suddenly and unexpectedly engaged.

But further than this : Christian reflection upon these two acts of Christ has from early days clearly

understood that their significance is by no means exhausted when we have grasped the fact of their evidential meaning. There is beyond this a profound spiritual significance. The two events may be regarded as predictive of the Church in two successive stages of its existence. In the former miracle, the net of the Church is launched out into the deep sea of the world; a vast multitude of fish is included, but the net is strained even to breaking, and there is grave risk that a portion of the capture will be lost. Here there is represented the Church's present state, in the perils of the world, the anxiety of the fishermen, the net torn by schisms, the heavily-burdened vessel, the need for help. But in the second miracle much is changed. Our Lord now stands upon the shore: not upon the sea, which signifies restlessness, turbulence, change; but upon the shore, which signifies eternity. The net now cast on the right side of the ship signifies the ingathering of no mixed multitude of good and bad, but solely the ingathering of the good. The net now no longer imperilled or breaking, is the Church no longer endangered by schisms. The voice upon the shore, 'Bring of the fish which ye have now caught,' is the summons to those fishers of men to render up the souls which they have won to the Lord, who is their rightful owner. The numbering of the fish is profoundly significant of the individual

worth of human souls. The redeemed are all numbered. If in one sense the redeemed are a great multitude whom no man could number, indicating the Church's vastness, yet there is a definite, separate individuality; every one of the redeemed by himself is known. And when their labours are concluded, and the Lord invites the seven to the meal which lies already prepared, what else is signified than the joys and rewards of Heaven to those who have endured the Apostolic toil?

If the general character of the Instruction assigned by the Evangelists to the great forty days be carefully considered, it impresses the mind as being far in advance of the mental state which the Apostles had reached at the time. It cannot therefore be the product of their own reflections. It does not in the least rise naturally out of their spiritual or intellectual condition. On the contrary, it leaves the impression of ideals suggested from without, not of thoughts which originated within. The recipients of the risen Christ's instructions can remember His words, but they have by no means fully grasped His meaning. Least of all could they have anticipated or invented His sayings. The only escape from this conclusion would be to say that these instructions were the creation of a later period, and read back into the earlier days. But the fact is that

the instructions recorded as delivered during the great forty days are characterised by a singular appropriateness, highly suggestive of historic truth. They are the natural sequences to what Christ taught before He died, and the natural antecedents to what the Apostles delivered in their preaching afterwards. They fit exactly into the position assigned them in the theological evolution of the time. They are exactly what He must have said in substance, if He really rose again, and if He is what Christendom has always asserted Him to be.

### III

The chief purpose of our Lord's appearances in the great forty days remains yet to be considered. The Evangelists do not represent Him as having returned exclusively for evidential or even instructive reasons. Beyond and above both these was the purpose in which His visits after the Resurrection culminated. That purpose was Authoritative: to confer on them authority.<sup>1</sup> He returned to found the Apostolate. The Evangelists declare that He reappeared to invest the Eleven with an office resembling in character His own. They say that He actually imparted to them certain portions of His power. They definitely declare that they received their commission from Him,

<sup>1</sup> Steinmeyer, *The Resurrection*.

not before He died, but after He rose from the dead. Observe the language in which His authority and commission is said to have been conveyed. 'All authority hath been given unto Me in Heaven and in earth; Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you. . . .'<sup>1</sup> The Evangelist here records that Christ confronted them in His Resurrection-state; that He appealed to it as conclusive proof that He is the Head of the Human Race; that He proclaimed Himself the recipient of all spiritual authority both in Heaven and on earth; and that in virtue of this fact of sole possession of spiritual power, He now conferred upon them a similar authority. That is the Evangelist's statement. Now the chief characteristic of the authoritative utterances of Christ in the great forty days is that they are creative words. They have given existence, and permanent existence, to observances and institutions. They have created the method of entrance into the Christian community, the sacrament of regeneration. A word, said to have been spoken just before He died, created the Eucharist; a word, said to have been spoken after He rose again, created Baptism. The word ascribed to the period, after His death, is just as influential as that spoken during ordinary earthly conditions. And in fact the forty

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. xxviii. 18, 19 (R.V.) See Appendix on Baptismal Formula.

days are crowded with creative utterances. That they actually did receive this authority from the risen Christ, and did not merely imagine it, seems for all the Apostles an absolute necessity. Every attempt to explain how the Apostles could have come to the subjective persuasion of that which did not really occur, leaves the whole problem completely unexplained. It does not satisfy the reason ; it does not account for the facts.

It will never do to say that they were certain that so good and holy a life must be victorious somewhere in the other world. Belief in their Lord's victorious existence beyond the grave cannot account for the conviction that He really came and gave them new authority. They would indeed have continued to cherish for His memory a love which nothing could abate. And their fond reminiscences would have lingered pathetically on the days of the Son of Man. They might, they would doubtless feel assured that transplanted human worth, above all when manifested in such dazzling sublimity, would flourish elsewhere. They might still, as they moved among the Galilæan familiar places, recall how He spoke and what He did in days which never could return. They might for a while hope on to see Him coming. But as the months and seasons passed on their even way, and the monotonous routine of prosaic daily toil absorbed them as of old, and nowhere came



one solitary ray of hope, one sign of His coming, it is impossible that this stubborn refusal of the other world to restore Him, or indicate His position therein, could ever have awakened within them the energy, the zeal, the moral force, the deathless vigour needed to bear laborious witness to the world or give them a message of life and resurrection to deliver across the incredulous earth. Not out of such imaginations can be born victorious hope or power like that which animated the men of Galilee, and sent them forth to do such deeds and say such burning words as must arrest mankind wherever the heart can feel or the head can think. But if He reappeared indeed, as they declare He did, if He conferred upon them authority to do this work, then we have an adequate explanation of the Apostolic lives and of the splendid transfiguration which their characters underwent. The receipt of such authority, the reappearance of the risen Christ to bestow it, seem to us a rigorous necessity.

The necessity for such authority and commission is illustrated in no disciple more forcibly than in the case of S. Peter. When we watch his position as leader in the Acts, we might well wonder how he can speak as he does of the place 'from which Judas by transgression fell,' remembering as we do the last occasion when he himself was confronted with Christ before He died. It was just at the critical hour when, flushed with



anger and fear, he denied the fact of the discipleship. The peculiar significance to S. Peter of the death of Christ, beyond the crushing of the convictions and hopes which he shared with all the disciples, was that it separated him for life from the Master whom he had disowned. The special pang and misery of the severance was, that his latest memory of Christ would have to be that look which drove him out in penitence and in shame. Now that S. Peter should ever have forgiven himself, and restored himself, and regarded himself as once more at the head of the Twelve, on the ground of some dream-fancy or imagination, is a thing incredible. How could he replace himself: he who spoke of the place whence Judas by transgression fell? An objective restoration appears psychologically indispensable.

Now if we accept the narrative given in S. John, we have an adequate explanation of his resumption of his former place. Personally, I own I do not understand how any man can read that pathetic narrative of the interview between the risen Master and St. Peter, and put it down as a work of the imagination. This is, I know, subjective criticism. But if ever an incident bore veracity on the face of it, I think it is that closing passage of S. John. To put it on the lowest ground, I do not believe the disciples were competent to invent a fiction so marvel-

lously accordant with our instinctive sense of what would have been the process of Peter's reconciliation, and so inimitably superior to the loftiest of our imaginings. We have fictions of the sub-apostolic age in abundance. We know what men could do, when they gave the rein to their earthly imaginations, and attempted the impossible task of describing new incidents in the life of Christ. And the contrast between their monstrous magniloquent achievements, and the sober, chastened, almost prosaic delineation of the four Evangelists, is one of the most impressive facts in literature.

And we have further evidence in S. Peter's case. In an Epistle <sup>1</sup> whose authorship no man challenges, S. Paul tells us that he went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. The subject of the Resurrection cannot possibly have been excluded from their conversation. For afterwards S. Paul wrote down these words: 'I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received . . . that He was seen of Kephas.'<sup>2</sup> He must have heard that from S. Peter's lips. S. Paul describes no details, but S. Peter must have made it plain in what way he received his authority. And it is wonderfully significant that when S. Peter came to write his first Epistle, his opening thought was this:—'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which,

<sup>1</sup> Galatians i. 18.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 5.

according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead !' and then he added affectionately, 'Whom having not seen ye love.' 'Begotten us again unto a lively hope.' I know no words which could more beautifully and naturally rise from the heart of one whose restoration took place as S. John describes.

Now this authoritative purpose of the manifestations ascribed to the risen Lord has peculiar importance of its own. For it demanded their activity. The evidential side and the instructive side of the Easter appearances left them, after all, but passive. They were so far simply men who saw, and men who heard. But the authoritative side of the risen Master's work imposed upon them labours of the most severe and sobering kind. It drove them out into a life of strenuous exertion.

We have now followed the testimony of the Evangelists along the three lines of purpose which they ascribe to the Resurrection-appearances; the evidential, the instructive, the authoritative. We have seen that the evidential appearances are characterised by unexpectedness, originality of conception, and individuality of form; that the instructions given by the risen Lord are in substance the natural consequents of His previous ministry, and the natural antecedents of the Apostolic preaching, coinciding accurately with the

place assigned to them in the evolution of religious thought; that the authoritative utterances have proved themselves to be creative phrases powerfully effective to the present day.

The testimony is cumulative, composed of many details of many kinds. And the conclusion, to which all the lines converge, appears the same: that this can be accounted for by objective reality and by nothing else.

The real value of the evidence is admirably expressed in the following words of a learned German writer:—

‘It is wasted effort trying to explain the Resurrection on purely subjective psychological or pathological grounds. Only as a truly objective supernatural event does it take its place in the historical and psychological conditions of the time.’<sup>1</sup>

It may be difficult to define precisely wherein the difference lies between evidence which betrays its own subjective origin, and evidence which attests itself to be caused by some objective reality; but to us it seems that no possible hesitation should exist as to the character of the evidence of the Evangelists. We say with moral certainty, this is historic truth.

<sup>1</sup> Beyschlag, *New Testament Theology*, i. 303.

## CHAPTER II

### THE TWO SERIES OF MANIFESTATIONS (JERUSALEM AND GALILEE)

NEGATIVE Criticism has of recent times challenged the belief of Christendom that the first Resurrection-appearances took place in Jerusalem. The position has been stated in the following terms: 'If we read attentively, we see that the Gospels are the echoes of two entirely distinct traditions, which no doubt became confounded in the end, but which were at first distinct and separately developed. According to one, the appearances of Jesus were all in Galilee; this is the Galilæan tradition. According to the other, they took place in Jerusalem and in its immediate environs; this is the Judæan or Jerusalemite tradition.'<sup>1</sup> The Galilæan tradition is said to be 'reproduced in its oldest form in the Gospels of Mark and Matthew.'<sup>2</sup> The Judæan tradition is said to be that in S. Luke.<sup>3</sup> The Fourth

<sup>1</sup> Stapfer, *Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, p. 190.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 191.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 197.

Gospel, it is said, unites the two currents, the Galilæan and the Judæan. The two traditions were placed side by side to form a continuous narrative. But this juxtaposition was artificial; it was made after the event. The two traditions were developed each in its own surroundings.<sup>1</sup>

Such is the theory of the negative critic. Accordingly we are required to study the two localities designated in Scripture as the scenes of our Lord's appearances after the Resurrection.

## I

For a study of the Galilæan series, to which first of all we confine our attention, we begin with S. Matthew.

1. S. Matthew records that S. Mary Magdalene and other women came on the first day of the week to see the Grave. That is to say, he lays the opening scene in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. And the message which the Angel sends through the Women is: 'Go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead; and, behold, He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him.'<sup>2</sup> Here the locality assigned for the meeting between our Lord and His disciples is Galilee; but the message manifestly implies that the disciples are still remaining in the

<sup>1</sup> Stapfer, *Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, p. 198.

<sup>2</sup> S. Matt. xxviii. 7.

Holy City. They have not yet fled away into Galilee through panic fear, as certain modern versions represent them to have done; and indeed, as the critical theory seems to require. They are in Jerusalem still. The narrator then describes how the women 'departed quickly from the Sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring His disciples word.' 'And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them.' S. Matthew then, after all, relates that the first appearance of the risen Lord happened near Jerusalem. But this of course cannot be reconciled with a theory which either confines appearances to Galilee, or gives priority to that locality. And in fact the negative criticism is disposed to say that this verse is interpolated. It is not difficult to defend a theory if the adverse evidence be removed.

We must then lay stress upon S. Matthew's evidence here, that the first appearance of the Risen Lord was near Jerusalem, which is, after all, the point in question. Then follows a repetition from the Lord Himself of the message to the Apostles, 'Go tell My brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see Me.'<sup>1</sup> Once more, then, the disciples have not yet fled to Galilee. Next comes the narrative of the guards and their entrance into the city;<sup>2</sup> a narrative which surely again implies the continued presence of the disciples in Jerusalem. For

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. xxviii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 11-15.



to say that the 'disciples came by night and stole Him away while we slept,' would certainly have no plausibility whatever if the disciples had already fled away from Jerusalem on the night when their Master was betrayed.

After the narrative of the guards comes the statement, 'Then the disciples went away into Galilee, unto a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.'<sup>1</sup> Now if we possessed S. Matthew's narrative only, we should probably infer that these events followed in close succession. But the narrative does not necessitate that inference. The original is less suggestive of close connection than the translation. The loosely-connecting particle with which the disciples' departure is introduced may suggest a logical rather than a chronological connection. There may be no intimate succession intended between this and the earlier statements. Moreover, the reference to a mountain where Jesus had appointed them, but which had not been previously mentioned, suggests the fragmentariness of the narrative. There is certainly nothing in S. Matthew's account, when analysed, to compel the supposition of close historical succession. In fact the disconnected character of this section in S. Matthew is apparent from the Evangelist's very words. The narrative contains four sections. The first, the appearance of the angel; the second, the

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. xxviii. 16.

appearance of Christ; the third, the story of the guards; the fourth, the appearance in Galilee. Now, while the first of these sections is closely connected with the second by the words 'and as they went,' and the second closely connected with the third by the words 'when they were going,' no similar connection is given between the third section and the fourth. It is possible, then, to place an interval of time after the account of the guards and before the departure for Galilee. In which case room is found at once for a whole series of manifestations in Jerusalem.

It seems therefore that the inference drawn from S. Matthew that appearances occurred exclusively in Galilee is due to the compression and condensation of the narrative. And if the Sermon on the Mount is a selected series of instructions given on various occasions, but condensed and arranged by the Evangelist; and if the grand chapter of the Parables is a similar series, not necessarily simultaneously uttered but collected as examples of the Saviour's method, there seems no obvious reason why the sacred writer may not have exercised a like discretion in the concluding pages of his Gospel. If the strict chronological succession is not adhered to in the selection either of Instructions or of Parables, is it absolutely certain that the Evangelist had any intention of recording the Resurrection-incidents in close unbroken succession, or of relating all he knew, rather than of selecting

what he deemed most suitable for his special purpose? Yet is not this precisely what the critical theory assumes if it would entirely exclude a Jerusalem series of manifestations?

Why S. Matthew records no Resurrection-appearances to the Apostles in Jerusalem is indeed an important problem, and one which we may not possess the data to solve. Was it because in the mind of the Evangelist the kingly utterance, 'All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth,' seemed best to harmonise with the kingly aspect of the life of Christ, of which his Gospel is the acknowledged exposition? At any rate, if no satisfactory solution be within our reach, that does not in the least justify the assumption that no selective principle guided S. Matthew's pen, or that he mentioned Galilee only because the Galilæan series was all he knew.

2. The evidence of S. Mark is complicated by the well-known problem of authorship in which the conclusion to the final chapter is involved. The principal MS. authorities are divided. Some terminate abruptly at the close of verse 8, with the words 'for they were afraid.' Others add a brief conclusion, not that with which we are familiar. Others again give the passage which stands in our ordinary text. It seems difficult to believe that S. Mark could have intended to end his narrative with the words 'for they were afraid.' The grammatical form of the sentence, still more the

statement it contains, the absence in that case of all appearance of the risen Lord, combine to render this extremely improbable. If the last twelve verses are a subsequent addition, then either the Evangelist left his narrative incomplete, or else the final page of his Gospel was lost. The authorship of the last twelve verses is a problem of the greatest interest. That the passage was added by S. Mark himself has been asserted and held improbable by critics of high authority. The latter is the prevalent opinion at the present time. 'It is,' says Dr. Hort, 'a condensed fifth narrative of the forty days.' 'It must have been of very early date,' says Dr. Salmond, ' . . . it embodies a true apostolic tradition, and it may have been written by some companion or successor of the original author.'<sup>1</sup> The shorter of the two alternative endings is never found in the writings of the Fathers and quickly passed away into obscurity. The longer ending (that is, the last twelve verses as we have them now) was 'judged worthy to complete the unfinished work of the Evangelist.' It is, says Dr. Swete, 'a genuine relic of the first generation, and it took its place unchallenged in the fourfold Gospel of the West.'<sup>2</sup>

If we turn to the contents of the final chapter in S. Mark, we see in a moment that this question of

<sup>1</sup> In *Hastings' Dict.*, s.v. 'Mark, Gospel of.'

<sup>2</sup> *Commentary on S. Mark*, p. cv.

the concluding passage has a most important bearing on the subject of the locality of the Resurrection-appearances. For the only statement which S. Mark's original narrative records as to locality, is that a message was sent from the Sepulchre through the women to 'tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see Him, as He said unto you.'<sup>1</sup> And it is expressly added that this message was not delivered through fear.<sup>2</sup> If we separate the last twelve verses, that is all. It has indeed been argued that this reference to Galilee indicates what the lost conclusion of the Gospel must have contained, namely, a description of an appearance in Galilee. It may be so. But inferences as to the contents of non-existent documents are precarious. And in any case, what cannot be determined is whether any Judæan series was also there. That is precisely what we find in S. Matthew after a similar injunction to go to Galilee. At any rate the original S. Mark does not very greatly strengthen the Galilæan evidence.

Now when we come to the last twelve verses of S. Mark, what is the evidence given by this 'condensed fifth narrative of the forty days'? It contains a summary of manifestations obviously in Judæa. There is a brief reference to the Journey to Emmaus reminding us of S. Luke.<sup>3</sup> There is an account of the appearance

<sup>1</sup> S. Mark xvi. 7.

<sup>2</sup> *v.* 8.

<sup>3</sup> *v.* 12.

to S. Mary Magdalene.<sup>1</sup> There is an appearance to the Eleven as they sat at meat, clearly in the house in Jerusalem, although this is not said; followed by a summary of His final commands and the statement of His Ascension. This is a Jerusalem series. No mention occurs of appearances in Galilee. This of course is startling, particularly after the promise to meet the Apostles in Galilee. The continuation of S. Mark leaves the Galilæan series untold, and dwells exclusively on the manifestations in Jerusalem.

## II

This brings us naturally to the second part of our investigation, which is concerning the Jerusalem series of our risen Lord's appearances.

S. Luke contains exclusively a Jerusalem series of manifestations. The only mention of Galilee occurs in the reference<sup>2</sup> made by the angels to a prediction spoken by our Lord while He was yet in Galilee. Here a group of women 'told these things unto the apostles,' and were disbelieved by them.<sup>3</sup> Then, after the visit of S. Peter to the grave,<sup>4</sup> comes the story of Emmaus, ending with the return of the Two Disciples to Jerusalem, where they 'found the Eleven gathered together, and them that were with them,

<sup>1</sup> S. Mark xvi. 9-11.

<sup>2</sup> S. Luke xxiv. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *v.* 11.

<sup>4</sup> *v.* 12.



saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.<sup>1</sup> Then follow our Lord's appearance in their midst, His demonstration of His identity, His reception of food, His Instructions in the Scriptures, and His constituting the Eleven to be His witnesses.<sup>2</sup> Then they are expressly bidden to 'tarry in the city of Jerusalem until endued with power from on high.'<sup>3</sup> And finally the Gospel concludes with a brief reference to the Ascension and the disciples' return to the Holy City.<sup>4</sup>

Such is the outline of S. Luke's instruction on the Resurrection. He gives an exclusively Judæan series; so exclusive that, if we possessed only the Gospel of S. Luke we should not know that the incidents of the Resurrection and Ascension did not occur on the selfsame day. Indeed, if we were bound to assume that an Evangelist does not know of the occurrence of a fact which he does not record, it might be said that he not only ignores but positively leaves no room for any Galilæan series of manifestations.

But it has been so ordered that S. Luke has himself in the Acts corrected the inference which the Gospel admits, that the work of the risen Master was completed in a single day. For there he adds the explanatory words, 'being seen of them forty days.'<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> S. Luke xxiv. 13-35.

<sup>2</sup> *vv.* 36-48.

<sup>3</sup> *v.* 49.

<sup>4</sup> *vv.* 50-53. For the text of the passage on the Ascension, see Chap. ix.

<sup>5</sup> Acts i. 3.



This does not in the least contradict the Gospel narrative. For our impression of the date of the Ascension was only an inference of our own, naturally suggested indeed, but not asserted by the writer. And that inference is now shown by the same writer to be incorrect. It was due to compression in the writing, not to the thoughts in the writer's mind.

### III

The Gospel of S. John remains. In the fourth Evangelist two series of Resurrection-narratives are given. The first is the series in Jerusalem, containing the appearance to S. Mary Magdalene, the appearance to the ten Apostles on Easter Day, and the appearance to the eleven Apostles on the Octave of Easter. And here the Gospel reaches its apparent close, with a general statement that our Lord did many other signs in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book, and with a special statement that the immediate purpose of the book is the creation of faith in Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God, and the ultimate purpose the conferring life through His Name. Then comes another chapter in which the Galilæan episode is given in considerable detail. This additional chapter can hardly be regarded as part of the Evangelist's original design: for the conclusion to the Jerusalem narrative

is manifestly intended to serve as the conclusion of the Book. The Galilæan episode is added as an appendix to the whole, written by the Evangelist himself, but added at a later time.

Now it may surely be said for certain that S. John's account was not in the first instance composed for the purpose of harmonising the other three. He cannot be said to have introduced first a Jerusalem series and then a Galilæan in order to co-ordinate the statements of S. Matthew and S. Luke. If that had been his intention, he would never have brought his Gospel to an apparent close immediately after a description of the Jerusalem series. He would never have added the Galilæan series in the form of an appendix. This is certainly not the method which it would occur to any harmoniser to adopt. It is instructive indeed to note that, if S. John records the Jerusalem series of appearances after the Resurrection, it is also he who records the Jerusalem episodes of the ministry.<sup>1</sup> Thus, both before the Resurrection and after, his attention is greatly directed toward Jerusalem. And yet the interest of S. John is not, after all, so much with localities as with persons. Constantly his real delight all through lies in the analysis of individual faith and character. His design is to show the origin and the process of development of individual faith and devo-

<sup>1</sup> Schleiermacher, *Theologie*, viii. p. 299.

tion, the surmounting of obstacles, the different avenues of approach to the same central conviction, the various degrees of external aid required by the separate personalities whose Resurrection-faith he immortalises. It has been suggested that he was partly concerned to show how far the faith of the Apostles was independent of the suggestions of the holy women.<sup>1</sup> Whether that is so or not, at any rate what he describes is a progressive series, an inverted series, from the highest to the lowest faith; first the faith without sight, then the faith created by the Voice only, then the faith which followed on sight, and the faith which only came after concessions to its arbitrarily imposed conditions.<sup>2</sup> Yet, while engaged on this analysis of human faith, it is most striking to notice that S. John at the same time restricts himself to the Jerusalem series of manifestations. Thus, while the fourth Evangelist is primarily engaged in unfolding the development of the Apostles' faith, his own and that of others, in their Master's Resurrection, he does at the same time confirm the other narratives. The desire to correct a misunderstanding of one of our Lord's sayings leads him to add the Galilæan episode, and so to combine in one Gospel what S. Matthew and S. Luke had, in their accounts, divided.

<sup>1</sup> Loisy, *Le Quatrième Évangile*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Westcott, *Commentary on S. John*.

## IV

The question of locality involves considerations of time. Is the interval between the Resurrection and the Ascension sufficient to allow a double series of appearances in Jerusalem and in Galilee? We answer confidently that it is. The appearances are noted by S. Luke to have occurred across a period of forty days. Some indeed would urge that the literalness of the number cannot be pressed, the figure being symbolical of a considerable duration. But there is another indication of time besides the reference to the forty days. The Crucifixion took place at the Passover, and the founding of the Church at Pentecost. This would limit the period from the Resurrection to the Ascension to the number of days allotted by S. Luke. We have, then, a period of forty days within which to find space for the Risen-appearances. The Jerusalem series occupied at least a week, for the appearance to the Eleven was on the ninth day after Easter. This reduces our days to thirty-two. The journey from Jerusalem to the Sea of Galilee, a distance of some ninety miles, would require at least six days. Allowing for the return journey to Jerusalem, this will be twelve. Thus we have twenty days left for the Galilæan episode, and for the final appearance at Jerusalem which cul-

minated in the Ascension. But, so far as can be shown, the number of manifestations in Galilee was only two; that to the Seven at the Lake, and that to the large assembly of above five hundred brethren at once. An objection has indeed been raised on the ground that some little time must have elapsed before the disciples could have returned to their ordinary occupation as fishermen on the Galilæan Lake, as S. John reports them to have done. But in answer to this it must be remembered that they had to provide themselves with food, and that the passage in S. John suggests that this was the first occasion of their resuming their usual manner of life. It is true that the assembling of the great body of disciples—the five hundred—may have required some little time, but the interval of twenty days seems more than adequate for all requirements. One would even think that it could have been done in half the time. Accordingly both series of manifestations can be included in the period of forty days, and there seems no insuperable difficulty at all, nor any real need to desiderate a lengthier interval. We must confess to a feeling that the difficulties in the way of including all the recorded appearances, both Judæan and Galilæan, within the limits of forty days have been very greatly exaggerated.

It remains to add some general reflections which a study of the series of manifestations has suggested.

1. To place the first appearances of our Lord in Galilee, it would of course be necessary to transfer the Apostles from Jerusalem. It would be necessary to understand that, when all the disciples forsook Him and fled, they continued an uninterrupted flight, never pausing for any length of time until they found themselves safe within the shelter of their Galilæan home. But to many minds this will appear the height of improbability: partly on the ground that the Apostles could scarcely in a body have abandoned their Lord so completely from the moment when He was arrested;<sup>1</sup> and partly because it is extremely unlikely that they should have left Jerusalem during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. However, whether such precipitate flight seems probable or not, what is certain is that not a shadow of historical evidence exists to confirm it. On the contrary, all the evidence points the opposite way. The obvious sense of the statement that they all forsook Him and fled is that they fled from the Garden of Gethsemane;<sup>2</sup> and it is expressly noted that S. Peter followed afar off to the High Priest's palace.<sup>3</sup> And the message sent through the women to S. Peter in particular, and to the Apostles in general, that our Lord was going before them into Galilee,<sup>4</sup> proves con-

<sup>1</sup> Steude, *Die Auferstehung Jesu Christi*, p. 120.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Loofs, *Die Auferstehungsberichte*, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> S. Mark xiv. 54.

<sup>4</sup> S. Mark xvi. 7.



clusively that the oldest tradition included the assertion that the Apostles were still waiting in Jerusalem on Easter Day. If it is not unnecessarily labouring an evident truth, it may be added that S. Peter's continued presence in Jerusalem is also suggested by S. Paul in writing to the Corinthian Church.<sup>1</sup> To some it has appeared that the founding of the first Christian community in Jerusalem confirms the Jerusalem series of Resurrection-manifestations.<sup>2</sup> For if Christ's appearances had been confined to Galilee, it is rather there than elsewhere that we should expect to find the Mother Church of Christendom. Different minds will, however, be differently affected by this suggestion. Possibly some will think that the Jerusalem Church might still be accounted for even in the absence of Jerusalem-manifestations.

2. The principal difficulty seems to lie in our Lord's injunction to go into Galilee. If the first manifestations were intended to occur in Jerusalem, it is natural to ask what is the meaning of dismissing the disciples to another place? Beside the distinct and apparently exclusive report of incidents in Galilee and incidents in Jerusalem, is the undoubted fact that, several times over, both in person before He died, and by angel messengers, and again in person after He rose, our Lord bade the disciples depart for Galilee. Galilee is singled out as the place where His meeting

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Steude, *ut sup.*



with them shall be held. Why this emphatic choice of Galilee, if, after all, He intended eight days to be spent by the Apostles in Jerusalem and a whole series of manifestations to occur in the city and in the suburbs? That is the difficulty, and it is certainly real. No doubt it is strange that an injunction to meet in Galilee should be followed by a series of meetings in Jerusalem. But what if it was our Lord's original design to manifest Himself in Galilee rather than in Jerusalem? Galilee was after all their home, where the larger number of disciples lived. It was free from antagonistic elements which would make the Holy City most unsuited for large assemblies of disciples. There were opportunities of retirement and peaceful self-revealing in Galilee not easily obtainable in Jerusalem. Suppose then that this was our Lord's design when He gave the order to depart for Galilee. Why then was the first appearance made in Jerusalem? Surely because the original intention was frustrated by the disciples' lethargy. Powerless to rouse their faith, the message reached them, but in vain. Paralysed by hopeless defeat, as it must have seemed, they paid no heed to the call of their risen Master. Their unresponding, apathetic state necessitated a change of plan. It was not the first time in human history when the plan of God was modified by human infirmities. The disciples simply would

not and did not move towards Galilee. Accordingly their risen Master came to them where they were. No wonder He upbraided them for their unbelief 'and hardness of heart because they believed not those who had seen Him after He was risen.'<sup>1</sup> Thus Galilee was first in intention, but Jerusalem first in fact. The contradiction between the order to go to Galilee and the narrative of appearances in Jerusalem is due to conflict of will between the Master and His disciples. And this diversity of purpose between the Lord and the Eleven naturally reflects itself in the record, which indeed would cease to be strictly historical were it otherwise.

Now this may or may not be the real explanation. It is at least conceivable. And the very conceivable-ness of it should bid us pause before we determine that the message and the facts present a hopeless contradiction. It may be that the suggested explanation is the truth. And certainly it puts no strain upon the facts. If the disciples, in response to their Master's message, had left at once for Galilee, they would have manifested greater faith. Yet out of their unresponding dullness good has been derived. For their immediate obedience would have prevented the occurrence of a primary Jerusalem series of manifestations. The Gospels would have been reduced to uniformity. But whether the existence in the

<sup>1</sup> S. Mark xvi. 14.

Evangelists of one harmonious tradition of Galilæan appearances far away from all possible inquiries at the grave would have increased the modern believer's faith, may be more than questioned.

3. Then again the whole evidence of the Evangelists will depend on their principles of composition.

Are they annalists? Are they inexorably governed by regard for chronological succession? Are they prompted by a determination to record every saying and every detail which they know? Does not one of them at least assure us that Jesus did many other things which are not recorded in his book? Is it not correct to say that all serious study of the Evangelical methods of writing leads us to conclude that two principles controlled their work: the principle of selection, and the principle of compression? They select from the materials at their disposal. They condense with comparative indifference to chronological considerations. They present us with different aspects of His holy life. They select what will best illustrate their special point of view. These two unquestionable principles of the evangelistic procedure go very far to explain how it is that S. Matthew can write without recording a Jerusalem manifestation to the Apostles, and S. Luke without recording one in Galilee; how S. Matthew compresses the incidents to such an extent as to give plausibility to the assertion that he did not know of appearances elsewhere; how

S. Luke leaves the impression in his Gospel that the Resurrection and the Ascension both occurred on Easter Day. These difficulties are the outcome of the method which the Evangelists adopted. That these principles of selection and compression must make it difficult for modern thought to arrange in chronological order the material so presented is sufficiently self-evident. But they also show the unreasonableness of dealing with the records as if they had been written on other principles.

4. Not only must the principles which governed the writers of the Gospels be remembered; it is equally necessary to remember the standpoint of the readers of these accounts. We do not know the precise amount of information already existing in the mind of the average Christian reader during the primitive age. With what store of Evangelical knowledge would he approach the reading of the Evangelists? How far would he be able to read between the lines, possess the key to the solution of what may be to us insoluble difficulties? It may seem a remark of great simplicity, yet it is fruitful with immense results, that the Gospels were written to give further enlightenment to men already instructed, and not to give primary information to men completely ignorant of the life of Christ.

‘Writing in the centre of a Christian Church to those who were familiar with the historic groundwork

of the Gospel, the Evangelist recounts from his own experience just those incidents which called out in the disciples the fullness of belief'<sup>1</sup>—so one of the greatest of our modern exponents of S. John describes the standpoint of the Evangelist's readers.

One thing at least seems certain. To approach the Gospels without any Christian presuppositions, without any accepted summary of Christian faith and principle, is, whatever else it may be, not to approach them as the original readers did. It is to approach in a condition of mind which would, inevitably, render one liable to misunderstanding. For it is certain that documents intended as first aid to the uninitiated must be composed in a totally different manner from works designed to bring ampler details to minds already to a considerable extent instructed. Hence it is that the Gospels continually take for granted that the reader will understand persons, names, references, allusions, which men beyond the precincts of the Church, men unfamiliarised with its habitual connections, practices, principles, and historical axioms, could not be reasonably expected to understand. There is a fearless confidence in the reader's Christian intelligence and religious knowledge manifested everywhere, and particularly indicated in the preface to the Gospel of S. Luke. There the author draws attention to the fact that writer and

<sup>1</sup> Westcott on S. John xx. 1, p. 287.

reader stand on common ground. If this makes the Sacred Documents more difficult for later generations, it rendered them more serviceable for the generations for which they were composed. And the Evangelists, like all other writers, must first consider their contemporaries. Men do not write in the first instance for generations yet unborn. If they did, they would probably be unintelligible both to those future generations and to their own.

But of course all this implies that the modern reader must endeavour by an exercise of the historic imagination, or rather, let us say, by previous instruction in Christian principles, to set himself in the position of readers in the primitive age. He must read the Evangelists within the precincts of Christendom rather than from without. He must not come, even if he could, with a vacant mind. He must come that he may know the certainty of those things in which he has been already instructed. But if he has been already instructed as the primitive Christians were, then undoubtedly the Resurrection will be one of the first principles with which his mind is already furnished. He will approach the book with the conviction of the community for which, and in which, it was written. And if he does this, the discrepancies of narrative will appear in a totally different proportion. And if he does not do this, he is employing the narrative for a purpose for



which it was not written; and however brilliant, critical, learned, ingenious, acute he may be—nay, because of these very endowments and acquisitions—he will be disabled from receiving the record as the writer intended it to be received.

5. Then further—It is impossible for us to read a volume of modern objections to the Resurrection without being impressed by their exaggeration of discrepancies. Even conceding that the divergences are as numerous and as serious as the writers say, still these are but one aspect of the narratives. There is the wonderful, substantial unity in the essentials of the subject which no amount of detailed divergences can remove. Attention is sometimes exclusively, or at any rate disproportionately, directed to the divergences. Adequate justice is certainly not done to the fact of unity.

Attempts to harmonise the four Evangelists are distinctly unpopular in the present age; partly through desperate determinations in the past to remove all difficulties even by arbitrary and questionable assumptions. But, however questionable some of the harmoniser's acts have been, and however unsatisfying the results, he has been equalled, to say the least, in his most arbitrary and questionable assumptions by adherents of the opposite school. And the reaction from the extreme which removed all difficulties has reached the opposite extreme which



magnifies them out of all proportion, and is really not more just nor near to truth than the system which it repudiates.

There is the greatest need in the critical world of a more balanced state of mind, which, while frankly ready to acknowledge unsolved, perhaps with our present knowledge insoluble, difficulties, will be equally ready to acknowledge the substantial agreement which lies behind these difficulties, and which they rather tend to confirm than to disturb. There is such a thing conceivable as a suspicious identity of evidence, wherein the very absence of difficulties suggests duplicity.

It is worth remembering how the evidence of the Evangelists to the Resurrection appeared to a mind habituated to historical studies and well disciplined in testing the value of such divergences. 'Men have exaggerated beyond all bounds,' says de Pressensé, 'the divergences in the Evangelical narratives. We do not deny these divergences, we claim no ability to remove them through the influence of some preconceived system; but estimated at their real worth, they never reach the heights of an insoluble contradiction.'<sup>1</sup> According to de Pressensé, the undeniable divergences in the canonical writings demonstrate the sincerity of their writers, and are sufficiently accounted for by the circumstances of so unique and unexpected a pheno-

<sup>1</sup> *Jésus Christ, son temps, sa vie, son œuvre*, p. 659.

menon as the Resurrection of their Master from the dead.<sup>1</sup>

Consider the moral and religious magnitude of the fact confronting us. Are these discrepancies the real, ultimate ground on which the Resurrection is rejected? Conceive them for a moment solved, explained, removed. Would the presentment of an indisputably consistent, chronologically exact account, minutely accurate down to the last detail, convince? Or are other reasons, presuppositions, obstructions to belief, the ultimate ground, while the outward discrepancies present a convenient battle space sufficiently remote from real convictions, upon which the discussion may be safely carried on? If this is so, is it not rather a waste of time that we should be dealing with discrepancies at all, however real? We are only on the outskirts of the land. The citadel is far away, almost out of sight. Yet there, not here, the real question lies; and to that surely, not to this, we should give our attention.

<sup>1</sup> *Jésus Christ, son temps, sa vie, son œuvre*, p. 660.

## CHAPTER III

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE THIRD DAY

‘THE third day He rose again from the Dead’—such is the familiar language in which Christendom expresses its conviction of the precise interval between the expiring on the Cross and the Resurrection. In recent controversy this duration of the interval has, like most other matters, been called in question. It may be well for us therefore to assemble the evidence for the truth of this statement of the Creed.

#### I

The first consideration is that our Lord Himself predicted it. He not only asserted that He would rise, but also gave precision to the promise by definitely assigning for its occurrence the third day. Now no one really imbued with the Christian spirit will estimate the security of our Lord’s utterances by the frequency of their reiteration. To the believer the question cannot be whether our

Lord enforced a statement many times, or whether He said it only once. And it is quite possible to attach undue significance to the question of recurrence in the Sacred Pages. Yet still, it is a most impressive fact that our Lord repeated this statement about the third day, and repeated it many times. Frequently in the Gospels comes the promise that after three days He will rise again. It is found substantially in all the four Evangelists. The fact of His Resurrection and the time of it are placed generally as the antithesis to the prediction of His Passion. The formula 'the third day' may be said to recur with almost monotonous emphasis, plainly showing how deeply the Saviour's anticipation had impressed the disciples' minds. There is the appeal to the experience of the prophet Jonah, and the parallel drawn with the coming experience of the Son of Man, Who would be 'three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.'<sup>1</sup> There is the reiterated statement in S. Mark that 'after three days,' or 'on the third day,' He would rise again.<sup>2</sup> There is a similar statement in S. Luke, followed by a remark on the incapacity of the disciples to harmonise the predictions of the Passion and Resurrection with their ideals of the experience appropriate to Christ.<sup>3</sup> And there is in S. John the

<sup>1</sup> S. Matthew xii. 40.

<sup>2</sup> S. Mark viii. 31; ix. 31; x. 34.

<sup>3</sup> S. Luke xviii. 33, 34.

same prediction under the different form: 'Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up,' followed by the comment, 'He spake of the Temple of His Body,' and the statement that when 'He was risen from the dead His disciples remembered . . . and believed.'<sup>1</sup>

The diversity of the expressions 'after three days,' and 'on the third day,' obviously implied no diversity of meaning on the part of the Evangelists; for they represent the Chief Priests reporting to Pilate the prediction 'after three days I will rise again,' and then immediately adding the request, 'Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day.'<sup>2</sup> The criticism which would discover disagreement between the various forms of the expression is hereby unconsciously refuted beforehand. It is quite possible to be even pedantic in our demands for precision of speech. Probably no contemporary of the Evangelists would have discerned material divergences: he would have seen through to the substantial harmony.

Recent criticism on the question whether our Lord did or did not predict His own Resurrection forms a curious psychological study. Sometimes the prediction is denied on the ground that what He predicted His disciples could neither have forgotten, nor ignored, nor misunderstood, nor disbelieved.

<sup>1</sup> S. John ii. 19, 21, 22.

<sup>2</sup> S. Matthew xxvii. 63, 64.

Sometimes it is affirmed; and employed to explain the origin of the Apostles' belief. But the negative position is far less popular than formerly. To attribute the prediction to the creative energy of the Apostles' faith in the Resurrection would leave the Resurrection itself unexplained. Recent criticism on the whole adopts the positive position, that our Lord did actually predict His Resurrection. One writer, although far removed from the Catholic standpoint, confidently affirms that if our Lord predicted His death as He certainly did, He must also have predicted His Resurrection, for that is, from the standpoint of His self-consciousness as Messiah, the necessary correlative. It is on Jewish principles 'psychologically certified.'<sup>1</sup> 'He could not believe in His being put to death, without at the same time being certain of His Resurrection in the literal sense hitherto attached to it.'<sup>2</sup> He framed His words in conformity with the language of Hosea,<sup>3</sup> and probably predicted that His Resurrection would take place on the third day.<sup>4</sup> Another still more recent critic<sup>5</sup> fully recognises that our Lord predicted His death, and also His Resurrection. When, on the basis of that recognition, the critic proceeds to attempt an explanation of the

<sup>1</sup> Schwartzkopff, *Prophecies*, p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 64.

<sup>3</sup> Hosea vi. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Schwartzkopff, p. 68.

<sup>5</sup> Holtzmann, *Life of Jesus*, p. 494.

Apostles' belief, we may challenge his inferences while we accept his acknowledgment. What remains clear is, that criticism increasingly tends to recognise that our Lord did actually predict His Resurrection on the third day. A third critical student of the teaching of Jesus is prepared to admit that the Evangelists' report is in this instance verbally correct:<sup>1</sup> he does not challenge the language, but desires to impose upon it another meaning. Here, again, the peculiarities of the critical exegesis need not prevent us from utilising his testimony to the impressiveness of the unanimous Evangelical tradition. Even the most negative of critics, even schools widely remote from the convictions of Christendom, do at any rate feel the force and acknowledge the veracity of the Gospel statement that Christ did really predict that He would rise again on the third day.

Moreover, the third day, thus impressed by frequent reiteration on the mind of the disciples, is subsequently mentioned by disciples and opponents also.

It was particularly retorted upon our Lord in the derision during His Passion: 'Ah, Thou that destroyest the Temple, and buildest it in three days, save Thyself.' It was repeated to Pilate just after our Lord was dead: 'Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while He was yet alive, After three

<sup>1</sup> Wendt, *Teaching of Jesus*.



days I will rise again.'<sup>1</sup> It seems implied in the comment of the two disciples on the Emmaus journey : 'And beside all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done.'<sup>2</sup>

The third day, then, is deeply ingrained into the substance of the Apostolic record. It cannot be extracted without wholesale destruction. There it is, and there it must remain.

## II

Next to the recorded prediction may be placed the recorded fulfilment. That the Resurrection occurred on the third day is unanimously testified in the primitive tradition.

1. It is implied in the notices of time in the Evangelists. All the four Evangelists agree that the journey to the grave took place on the first day after the Sabbath. It is clear that the Crucifixion happened on the day before the Sabbath.<sup>3</sup> And it is expressly said that the Sabbath lay between the two occurrences.<sup>4</sup> Thus the chronological notices confirm the evidence.<sup>5</sup>

2. In addition to the evidence of the Evangelists,

<sup>1</sup> S. Mark xv. 29, 30; S. Matt. xxvii. 40; S. Matt. xxvii. 63.

<sup>2</sup> S. Luke xxiv. 21.

<sup>3</sup> S. Matthew xxviii. 1; S. Mark xvi. 2; S. Luke xxiv. 1; S. John xx. 1.

<sup>4</sup> S. Mark xvi. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Dobschütz, *Ostern und Pfingsten*.

there is further the testimony of S. Paul. The Apostle tells the Corinthians, 'I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ . . . rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.'<sup>1</sup> Here it is evident that the fact of the actual occurrence of the Resurrection on the third day was not derived by S. Paul from Scripture, but from tradition. It is the account transmitted by the original witnesses and received from them by S. Paul. Doubtless Scripture confirmed the fact, but tradition conveyed it.<sup>2</sup> Now this testimony of S. Paul to the Resurrection of Christ on the third day is more ancient than that of the first three Gospels. It is independent evidence.<sup>3</sup> We naturally recall here S. Paul's interview with S. Peter at Jerusalem. From S. Peter most probably he derived it.<sup>4</sup>

3. Perfectly in keeping with this is the reference to the third day in the speech said to have been delivered by S. Peter in the house of Cornelius: 'Him God raised up the third day, and shewed Him openly.'<sup>5</sup>

4. There is one witness more. The Resurrection of Christ on the third day has so powerfully impressed itself on Christendom as to become commemorated in the observance of the first day of the week as the Lord's

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4.

<sup>2</sup> Loois, *Die Auferstehungsberichte*; and Keim, *Jesus of Nazara*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. de Pressensé, *Jésus Christ*, p. 664.      <sup>4</sup> See Keim, vi. p. 296.

<sup>5</sup> Acts x. 40.

Day. The transference of religious devotion from the Sabbath to the Lord's Day is surely one of the most striking witnesses to the period within which the Resurrection occurred. When S. Paul directs the collection for the poor to be made at Corinth on the first day of the week, he does not consider it necessary to explain why he selected that day.<sup>1</sup> The thoughts of his readers would naturally revert to the first day of the week on which the Lord rose from the dead, and the Church was evidently already accustomed to keep that day in religious weekly observance.<sup>2</sup>

'The third day,' says Dr. Sanday, 'is hardly less firmly rooted in the tradition of the Church than the Resurrection itself. . . . It is strange that so slight a detail should have been preserved at all, and still stranger that it should hold the place it does in the standard of the Church's faith. We must needs regard it as original.'<sup>3</sup>

### III

But why the period, 'three days'? The Resurrection on the third day is said by S. Paul to have been 'according to the Scriptures.'<sup>4</sup> The reference may be to the experience of Jonah adduced by our

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Cf. Knowling, *Witness of the Epistles*, p. 368.

<sup>2</sup> Maclear, *Evidential Value of the Eucharist*.

<sup>3</sup> *Outlines of the Life of Christ*, p. 183.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 4.

Lord Himself as parallel to His own coming experience. Or it may be to the passage in Hosea :

‘ After two days will He revive us ;  
in the third day He will raise us up,  
and we shall live in His sight. ’<sup>1</sup>

The primary reference of this promise is to a quickening of Israel in a very brief period from its deathlike state of rejection, nor is it clear that there was any pre-Christian application of it to the personal experience of the Christ.<sup>2</sup> That in the light of the Resurrection the spiritual significance of the passage became obvious is natural enough. But the words can hardly be considered sufficiently explicit to have imposed this meaning beforehand on devotional study. There is no adequate ground for asserting that the Old Testament passage suggested or created the belief that the Resurrection would happen on the third day. Conversely, however, we can well understand that such language became illumined by the actual occurrence. It was not the Scripture which caused the conviction, but the conviction which explained the Scripture. Indeed, in general this is the character of the Old Testament predictions. They are not for the most part so explicit as to promote belief in the occurrence of the events predicted. They are profoundly significant in retrospect, but indefinite in anticipation. It is conceivable enough that the

<sup>1</sup> Hosea vi. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Keil and Delitzsch.

contemporaries of Hosea saw nothing in his language beyond the allusion to contemporary events. Viewed from the Christian standpoint the words speak of those divine deeds of resuscitation of which the Resurrection of Christ is the supreme and most glorious example. But the words did not create the belief. As a gifted German writer says: 'The tradition that Jesus rose from the dead on the third day can only have arisen in virtue of the fact that appearances occurred on that day.'<sup>1</sup>

But all this means that belief in the Resurrection on the third day was due primarily to its actual occurrence. The prediction of Christ and the language of the older Prophets were then seen to range themselves as wondrous signs of foresight and providential determination working in ways unexpected by men to the completion of the purposes of God.

#### IV

The importance of the third day in the evidences of the Resurrection is obvious.

As Strauss admitted long ago, if the visions of the Apostles originated in what he calls a psychological revolution, a longer interval would certainly be required than a single day. More than a few hours must assuredly intervene before the disciples could

<sup>1</sup> Weiss, *Life of Christ*, iii. p. 389.

recover from the confusion into which the catastrophe of the Passion had thrown them. 'Supposing in particular,' he writes, 'that it was from renewed and profounder study of the sacred writings of the Old Testament that the certainty arose that their Jesus, in spite of suffering and death, was the Messiah, and that His sufferings and death were only the passage to the glory of the Messiah, for this also a longer time was requisite.' If, therefore, it is true that on the third day after His death appearances of Jesus took place, it seems 'inconceivable that these appearances were merely subjective visions.'<sup>1</sup>

Strauss endeavours to dispel the objection by suggesting that 'the change was wrought by an electric discharge of overloaded feelings. Emotions do not wait for reason. Imagination works everything. Reflection comes to the rescue afterwards.'<sup>2</sup> Now we may be prepared to acknowledge the capability of emotion to produce very wonderful results. But the Apostolic conception of the glorified Christ is at the lowest a rational and systematic scheme. It might, as is admitted, originate from careful and renewed study of the Sacred Writings. But to make nerve storms, or electrical discharge of overloaded feelings, a substitute for profound study, and productive of a systematic and thoughtful exegesis, manifests nothing so forcibly as the inability of the critic

<sup>1</sup> Strauss, *New Life*, i. p. 431.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 433.

to explain on merely natural grounds the Apostolic change of attitude within so limited a space of time. Criticism has been reduced to its last resources when it would attempt to account for the belief in the Resurrection of Christ by an electrical discharge. The objection, as Strauss has so clearly stated it, remains unaffected by his endeavours to remove it. The mental change, the new theory as to the path which the Messiah should tread, the scriptural interpretations, demand a considerable interval for their production. The third day does not allow that interval. And against this fact of the third day no merely rationalistic view can manage to hold its own.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE EMPTY GRAVE

BEFORE considering the evidence that the grave was found empty, it is important to note the stress laid by the Evangelists on the fact that the Body was buried there. It is remarkable that all the four Evangelists introduce the figure of Joseph of Arimathæa; and each with separate touches and independent characteristics suggestive of convergent lines of testimony rather than of varied repetition from a single source. A study of the four yields the following results:—Taking S. Luke as our basis, we are introduced to a man named Joseph, who is traced to Arimathæa, a city of the Jews. The description of him in S. Luke informs us that he was a counsellor, but dwells chiefly on his spiritual qualities: he was ‘a good man and a righteous,’ ‘he had not consented to their counsel and deed,’ he was ‘looking for the Kingdom of God.’ S. Mark confines himself to the statement that he was a counsellor of honourable estate, and that he was looking for the Kingdom of

God. S. Matthew adds that he was rich, and that he was also a disciple. S. John explains that this discipleship was secret for fear of the Jews. S. Luke continues that Joseph of Arimathæa went to Pilate and asked for the Body of Jesus. S. Mark characterises this action as courageous, and describes the surprise and caution of the magistrate: Pilate 'marvelled if He were already dead: and, calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether He had been any while dead. And when he learned it of the centurion, he granted the corpse to Joseph.' This magisterial verification of the facts is recorded in S. Mark alone. S. Matthew says that Pilate commanded the Body to be given up, S. Luke that Pilate 'gave him leave,' S. Mark that he 'granted the corpse to Joseph.' S. Mark and S. Luke record that Joseph took the Body down—that is, from the Cross. S. John here introduces Nicodemus as assisting him: who came 'bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes about a hundred pound weight.' S. Mark says that Joseph brought a linen cloth; S. Matthew and S. Luke that he wrapped the Body within it; S. John adds 'with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.' Then comes the account of the tomb. S. John says that in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, wherein was never man laid. S. Mark says it was hewn out of a rock; S. Luke

that it was hewn in stone where never man had yet lain. S. Matthew says that the tomb was Joseph's own, and that it was he who had had it constructed. S. Mark says that he rolled a stone at the door of the tomb; S. Matthew adds that the stone was great. Neither S. Luke nor S. John says anything about the stone, but both record that on Easter morning the women found that it had been rolled away.

The incident of the burial closes in all Evangelists except in S. John with reference to the women who were the silent witnesses. S. Luke says that 'they followed after and beheld the tomb, and how His Body was laid'; S. Matthew that 'they were sitting over against the sepulchre.'

These indications of the exact locality of the grave, this naming of the witnesses, both the men and the women, are particularly suggestive of the attention directed to the actual place of our Lord's burial in the earliest tradition. Every detail is carefully attested. The fact of the death is verified through the Roman magistrate himself, who did not yield up the Body until after ascertaining not only that Christ was dead, but that he had been some while dead.<sup>1</sup> There are witnesses throughout. The attendance at the funeral is known. The burial is witnessed by those who knew Him. Disciples note particularly not only where, but even how His Body was

<sup>1</sup> S. Mark xv. 44.

laid. So vivid are the simple details that we can realise the scene for ourselves. All this is important in view of modern theories, which assure us that everything was in confusion at the burial of Christ, that no one knew exactly in which grave among many the Body had been placed, and that a very natural mistake of one burial-place for another led to the assertion that the grave was empty. These painful perversions are only mentioned here to show that negative criticism is compelled to ignore the Gospel tradition and write a new account if it would give stability to its own theories. The concurrent testimony of the Four Evangelists, while revealing the affection which gathered at the Master's grave, has unconsciously anticipated and refuted the legends invented in the nineteenth century.

From the evidence that the grave was occupied we pass to the evidence that it was vacated.

# I

We may begin with the evidence of the Evangelists. All four have their report to give.

S. Matthew reports that S. Mary Magdalene and the other S. Mary came to see the sepulchre; that the angel who rolled away the stone and terrified the guards addressed the women with the words, 'He is not here, for He is risen'; and further invited them to see the place where the Lord lay; that the guards

were bribed by the Jewish authorities to accuse the disciples of stealing the Body away; and that this accusation was commonly reported among the Jews at the time when his Gospel was written.

S. Mark records that S. Mary Magdalene and other women brought sweet spices to anoint the Body; that on the road they were concerned to know who would remove for them the stone with which the grave was closed; that on arrival they found it rolled away; that they were addressed by one clothed in white, who reassured them in the words, 'He is risen, He is not here: behold the place where they laid Him'; and finally, that 'they said nothing to any man, for they were afraid.'

S. Luke records that the women came to the Sepulchre very early in the morning, bringing the spices which they had prepared; that they found the stone was rolled away, and entering 'found not the Body of the Lord'; that S. Peter paid a visit to the grave; that, 'stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.' He also describes the two disciples on the Emmaus road discussing the problem presented by the empty grave, and confirming the statement of the women that the Body could not be found.

Readers of the Revised Version will see the very important variation noted here in the margin of

S. Luke: 'Some ancient authorities omit verse 12'—the verse which describes the visit paid to the grave by S. Peter. The Revised Version does not omit the passage, but it is omitted by Westcott and Hort, chiefly on the authority of the great MS. at Cambridge known as Codex Bezae.

Some think the verse interpolated from S. John, and that the context is continuous with it. It would seem, however, that the tide of criticism on this verse is turning. The well-known German critic, Friedrich Blass, has recently reminded us that the removal of verse 12 still leaves another reference to the Apostles' visit to the grave. The passage still remains—'and certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said'—that is to say, they could not find the Body of Christ. The remark of Blass is worth recording. He asks whether this verse also is an interpolation. Its removal would no more leave a gap than the removal of verse 12. 'But neither have we evidence for that omission, nor is the verse found in S. John.'<sup>1</sup> And Blass significantly adds that while, as an editor, he felt 'bound to omit verse 12, like Tischendorf and Westcott-Hort,' yet 'doubts still remain.' There are evidently misgivings whether the verse ought not, after all, to be retained.

S. John's narrative reports that S. Mary Magdalene

<sup>1</sup> Blass, *Philology of the Gospels*, p. 189.

communicated to S. Peter and to himself the news, 'They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him.' Then follows the visit of S. Peter and S. John.<sup>1</sup>

The force of this concurrent testimony of the Evangelists to the fact of the empty grave is generally admitted among negative critics. Doubtless the willingness to make this admission is in many cases due to the difficulty of accounting for belief in the Resurrection apart from the fact of the empty grave; but still, the fact of this general concurrence is felt to be singularly weighty.

'There is no reason to doubt,' says one, 'that the women could not carry out their purpose, simply because they found the grave empty.'<sup>2</sup> 'This is the first fact,' says another, 'that stands out, certain, authentic, undeniable, from all the narratives. There is not the slightest doubt that the tomb was empty on the morning of the third day after Jesus' death.'<sup>3</sup> 'In all four Evangelists,' says a third, 'the empty grave plays an important part.'<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Réville says that the starting-point for all discussion on the resurrection of Jesus is the material fact that on the morning of the Sunday following the Crucifixion, that

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. xxviii. 1 ff.; S. Mark xvi. 1-8; S. Luke xxiv. 1-24; S. John xx. 1-10.

<sup>2</sup> Holtzmann, *Life of Jesus*, p. 497.

<sup>3</sup> Stapfer, *Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, p. 189.

<sup>4</sup> Steude, p. 16.



is to say, on the next day but one, at an early hour the tomb in which the Body had been deposited was found vacated.<sup>1</sup> Even so antagonistic a writer as Schenkel is no less emphatic. 'It is an indisputable fact that in the early morning of the first day of the week following the Crucifixion the grave of Jesus was found empty.'<sup>2</sup> Of course it is distinctly understood that the recognition which these and other writers give to the fact is one thing; their explanation of the fact is another. It is their recognition of the fact which concerns us here.<sup>3</sup> The weight of the Evangelists' united testimony in this matter is so strong that it cannot with any justice be rejected. And such appears to be the mind of many negative critics.

## II

That the grave was empty would seem to be required by the Jewish contemporary belief in resurrection. This belief was very widely prevalent in the time of Christ.<sup>4</sup> It was the conviction of the people generally that 'many that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.'<sup>5</sup> And although the aristocratic

<sup>1</sup> Réville, *Jésus de Nazareth*, ii. p. 453.

<sup>2</sup> Schenkel, *Characterbild Jesu*, p. 317.

<sup>3</sup> To the same effect are Dobschütz and Loofs.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Salmond, *Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, p. 332.

<sup>5</sup> Daniel xii. 2.

party of the Sadducees emphatically denied the doctrine of bodily resurrection, yet the very terms in which this denial is recorded in the Gospel suggest a position of doctrinal singularity, an opinion which the mass of the Jews did not share. The attempt to explain our Lord's stupendous power on the ground that He was one of the old prophets or John the Baptist risen again from the dead indicates how natural the thought of resurrection was to the Jews of that time.<sup>1</sup> The reply of Martha before the raising of Lazarus, 'I know that he shall rise again at the last day,' is but another instance of the widely spread conviction. The narratives of the raising of Lazarus, and of the daughter of Jairus, and of the son of the Widow of Nain, all testify to a generation familiarised with the conception of resurrection of the dead.<sup>2</sup> Then, again, the practice of embalming, the anxiety for the preservation of the corpse, the doctrine that death was a severance between body and soul, and resurrection their corresponding reunion—all these are confirmatory evidences tending to the same conclusion, that to the Jewish mind the empty grave was essential to the very idea of resurrection. They could not have believed that He was risen if they had not found the grave vacated.<sup>3</sup>

And our Lord Himself by no means taught His

<sup>1</sup> Pfleiderer, *Gifford Lectures*, ii. p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> Atzberger, *Eschatologie*, p. 334.

<sup>3</sup> Dobschütz, p. 21.

disciples otherwise. The Resurrection had a prominent place in His teaching. And by resurrection, although our Lord does not denote resumption of life under former terrestrial conditions, yet assuredly He does invariably mean restoration of the former body under a form compatible with the heavenly existence.<sup>1</sup> If His saying, 'the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God,'<sup>2</sup> must be interpreted of a moral and spiritual resurrection; the saying which quickly follows, that 'all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth,' is unmistakably a forecast of a bodily resurrection. Such teaching as this must have familiarised its listeners with the thought of a resumption of the body after death. And, for men so trained, belief in the resurrection would have required belief in the fact of the empty grave.

### III

But it has been asserted that, whatever the Evangelists might think, at any rate S. Paul's theory of the resurrection was independent of all interest in the empty grave.<sup>3</sup> His theory of the spiritual body—so it is said—does not in the least require the resurrec-

<sup>1</sup> B. Weiss, *Biblical Theology*, i. p. 90.

<sup>2</sup> S. John v. 25-28.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Holtzmann, *Life of Christ*.

tion of the material elements of the buried corpse. And it is further remarked that S. Paul, in his evidences of the Resurrection, not only makes no appeal to the emptiness of the grave in his summary of the evidences, but actually makes no reference to the subject at all in his teaching. In S. Paul's view, then, so it is asserted, the disappearance of the body destined to corruption is not connected of absolute necessity with the Resurrection.

Now this supposed indifference of S. Paul to the question of the empty sepulchre is based partly on the asserted independence of his theology, and partly on his omission of any reference to the fact. But here we must remember S. Paul's antecedents. He was educated in the principles of the Pharisees, and doubtless held the prevalent theory of physical resurrection. As Schmiedel truly says, 'His theology only came into being after his conversion to Christianity. When he first came to know of Jesus as risen he was still a Jew, and therefore conceived of resurrection in no other way than as reanimation of the body.'<sup>1</sup> His antecedents therefore would readily concur with the belief that the grave was found empty, if that announcement was made to him as part of the original tradition. And that this was actually the case appears from the great passage in 1 Corinthians: 'I delivered unto you first of all that which I also

<sup>1</sup> Schmiedel in *Encycl. Biblica*, s.v. 'Resurrection,' col. 4059.

received, how that Christ died . . . and that He was buried, and that He rose again.' That was the original tradition delivered to S. Paul. And what it means is clear. The three successive terms—died, buried, rose—represent a series of continuous experiences. There would be no significance at all in the tradition that He was buried unless that which was buried was also that which rose.<sup>1</sup> The Burial of Jesus, inserted in the original tradition between His Death and His Resurrection, implies the announcement of the empty grave. 'That Jesus was buried and that He has been raised cannot be affirmed by any one who has not the reanimation of the body in mind.'<sup>2</sup> And the theology of S. Paul was in perfect harmony with the tradition of the empty grave. It is most true that the Apostle maintained a theory of resurrection in a purely spiritual state. 'He figured to himself the Body of Jesus as being like the dead at the Last Day who shall be raised incorruptible.' But none the less did he believe that Jesus rose literally from the dead; that His body came forth out of the grave. Otherwise, says Schmiedel, the idea of Resurrection would be abandoned. Resurrection is the resuscitation, however changed, of that which was buried. And S. Paul's selected illustration of the seed and the plant is confirmatory of this. It is the dead grain itself which is quickened.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Schwartzkopff.

<sup>2</sup> Schmiedel.

S. Paul does not regard the Resurrection as a mere endowment with a heavenly body which has nothing whatever to do with the earthly one lying in the grave.<sup>1</sup> Resurrection consists in the issuing forth from the grave of that which reposed within it. This is again confirmed by the Apostle's teaching elsewhere. When he says that 'the dead in Christ shall rise first,'<sup>2</sup> or that 'Christ was raised up from the dead,'<sup>3</sup> or that 'God hath raised Him from the dead,'<sup>4</sup> or 'He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies'<sup>5</sup> — he is evidently thinking, not of mere personal continuous identity in a higher state, but of literal bodily resurrection from the dead.<sup>6</sup> What S. Paul intended to convey by the phrase 'the dead in Christ shall rise first' seems indisputable after he has added, 'then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.'<sup>7</sup> There is assuredly no difference between this teaching and the ordinary conviction of contemporary Jewish thought. When S. Paul wrote those words he certainly believed, as the Galilæan Apostles believed, in the rising up of the present physical frame.

It seems quite impossible, in the face of this instruc-

<sup>1</sup> Schwartzkopff and Dobschütz.

<sup>3</sup> Romans vi. 4.                      <sup>4</sup> Romans x. 9.

<sup>6</sup> Krüger, *Die Auferstehung Jesu*.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Thess. iv. 16.

<sup>5</sup> Romans viii. 11.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Thess. iv. 17.

tion given to the Thessalonians, to represent S. Paul as less interested than the other Apostles in the question of the empty grave. There is yet another passage in S. Paul which some have thought to indicate belief in the disappearance of the physical frame from the grave. The Apostle employs the remarkable expression, 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'<sup>1</sup>

Thus S. Paul's conception of the Resurrection is not of a mere immortality of Jesus, but of bodily coming forth from the grave; and it is upon this that he bases the Christian's faith and hope.<sup>2</sup> 'It is indisputable to me, as it is to many others,' says Loofs, 'that S. Paul viewed the Resurrection of Jesus only in the shape of a revivification of the Body which was laid in the grave.'<sup>3</sup>

Why S. Paul makes no explicit appeal to the empty grave is another matter, but, at least, his silence is no proof of disbelief or of ignorance. The proverbial insecurity of the argument from silence ought by this time to make us cautious in what we venture to build upon it. When a gifted writer says that it was St. Paul's 'intention to give a most detailed account,'<sup>4</sup> we are bound to answer with an emphatic denial. If there is one thing more than another

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 54.

<sup>2</sup> B. Weiss, *Life of Jesus*, ii. p. 553; cf. Loofs.

<sup>3</sup> *Die Auferstehungsberichte*, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Keim.



which the narrative in 1 Cor. xv. manifests, it is the intention of the Apostle to give the briefest summary. The condensation of his own evidence into a single sentence is surely proof sufficient that this was so. An account of six appearances of the risen Lord within the limits of six verses cannot possibly represent an intention to give a most detailed account. We have no right to say that what S. Paul did not mention he did not know. He also, as is notorious, makes no mention of the evidence of the women. If, as has been sometimes thought, he deliberately restricted himself to the evidence of the official witnesses, the omission of appeal to the empty grave is partly explained. It was principally attested by the women.<sup>1</sup> But it may be that, since the condition of the empty grave was after all but negative, the Apostle preferred to confine himself in his brief summary to the positive evidence of the actual manifestations.

It may be also true that the empty grave would not hold the same position for S. Paul as it would for S. John or S. Peter, because for him it had not come within the range of experience. A man who actually stood within that vacant grave on the early Easter morning and experienced the sudden rush of overwhelming thought and emotion such as, according to the record, came to S. John, must have felt ever

<sup>1</sup> Rohrbach, *Die Berichte über die Auferstehung*, p. 78.

after very differently on the subject from one to whom the subject only came as a report and a tradition. It lacked for S. Paul the vivifying element of personal experience. He had not seen it with his own eyes. This may partly account for the fact that he disregards it in his summary of evidence.

## IV

There is again the evidence given in the application to Jesus Christ of the passage in the Psalm, 'neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.'<sup>1</sup> S. Peter sees an exact parallel between this Psalm and the physical experience of the dead Christ. It is a reference to the Resurrection. 'He seeing this before, spake of the Resurrection of Christ that His soul was not left in hell, neither did His flesh see corruption.'<sup>2</sup> No contrast could be greater than between this and the ordinary experience as exemplified in David. He manifestly saw corruption. 'He is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.'<sup>3</sup> The fact of the empty grave is here involved, and is thrown out as a challenge in the very city where our Lord was buried, and that within six weeks of the burial. The whole argument of S. Peter would be to its hearers and to the entire nation absolutely worthless if any could refute the major premiss of the empty grave.

<sup>1</sup> Acts ii. 27.<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 31.<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 29.

A similar argument with characteristic differences is founded on the same language of the Psalm by S. Paul in his address in the Synagogue of Pisidian Antioch. David, he tells the Jewish hearers, 'saw corruption, but He, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.'<sup>1</sup>

## V

Another evidence that the grave was empty may be found in the controversial use of the fact between Jew and Christian. In the narrative of the guards given by S. Matthew, a reference is made to the Jewish accusation against the Apostles as having themselves fraudulently removed the Body from the grave. The statement that 'His disciples came by night and stole Him away'<sup>2</sup> was 'commonly reported among the Jews until this day';<sup>3</sup> that is, down to the period when the Evangelist was writing. This was the Jewish version; and it is the version reproduced in the later rabbinical books.

But this Jewish accusation against the Apostles takes for granted that the grave was empty. What was certain was that the grave was empty. What was needed was an explanation. The Christian explanation was resurrection. The Jew retorted upon the Christian as the perpetrator and deceiver, and pro-

<sup>1</sup> Acts xiii. 36, 37.

<sup>2</sup> S. Matthew xxviii. 13.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 15.

pagated the story that the disciples had emptied the grave.

Observe, then, the assumption underlying all this dispute—that the grave was really vacant.<sup>1</sup> The report which the guards were paid to propagate, that the disciples stole Him away while they slept, would be absolutely meaningless unless the emptiness of the grave was accepted by Jew and Christian alike. Nor could the Evangelist S. Matthew possibly have inserted it in his account unless the same fact was the general conviction of the Church at the time when his Gospel was written.<sup>2</sup>

## VI

S. Matthew's narrative of the guards at the sepulchre is viewed unfavourably in critical circles at the present day, but on grounds which are chiefly subjective and capricious.

Réville, for example, does not think that Pilate would have been so condescending as to send the guards after his recent defeat by the Sanhedrin: but might not Pilate have been influenced by other considerations? It does not seem to him probable that the other Gospels would have omitted the incident, if true. But are they not allowed to make a selection

<sup>1</sup> Steude, *Die Auferstehung*, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Rohrbach, p. 82.

of materials? Must omission proceed from ignorance?

Réville thinks again that the women approaching the grave would have been concerned rather about the guards than about removing the stone had they known of the soldiers' existence. Criticisms so trifling as these really hardly appear to deserve a serious reply. Is it, for instance, impossible that the women should not have known of the interview between the Pharisees and Pilate, and conversed before they came within sight of the grave? There is more plausibility in the objection that His enemies remembered His prediction better than His adherents. The objection that the Sanhedrin ought, if they believed in the soldiers' story, to have acknowledged in it a manifestation of divine power, or, if they disbelieved it, to have denounced them to Pilate, is scarcely relevant in questions of historic fact — unless, indeed, we are prepared to say that committees of religious men invariably act ideally.

Réville admits that the accusation against the disciples of having stolen the Body is on the face of it absurd.<sup>1</sup> When we consider their state of mind on the night after the Passion, their profound discouragement, the incredulity with which they met the women who announced that Christ was risen, there is not the shadow of verisimilitude in the sug-

<sup>1</sup> Rohrbach, p. 459.

gestion that they had plotted to steal the Body in order to make men believe in a Resurrection. Such is Réville's admission.

But obviously the emptiness of the grave does not demonstrate resurrection. What, then, can have happened? Réville's method of explaining the emptiness of the sepulchre is to assume that human hands had secretly removed the Body; then to investigate among the various parties which of them would have profited most by its removal; and finally to decide that the parties who derived the most advantage must have perpetrated it. He adopts the maxim, *Is fecit cui prodest*: Whoever would have gained the most by it must have committed the crime. Where that maxim would lead us if applied to history generally one shrinks from contemplating. Réville, however, has no hesitation. The problem, then, is merely to locate the blame. It cannot be ascribed to the Apostles. By a process of exhaustion, he comes to the directors of the Sanhedrin. They are the men to gain most by the removal of the Body. They were affronted by the thought that the Crucified should receive an honourable burial. Moreover, the grave would become a place of pilgrimage for the followers from Galilee and a danger to the peace of Jerusalem. What more simple than to forestall these risks to social security by removing the body where it would not be found? Probably, suggests Réville,

the Sanhedrin did really bribe the soldiers to do the work and hold their tongues. They could secure the concurrence of Pilate if they represented that this was the best way to prevent fanatical outbreaks in future. Such is the story of the guards according to Réville.

Now, one would have the right to demand that when a story is discredited for its asserted improbabilities, and another version substituted in its place, the new should at least be exempt from improbabilities of a similar kind. But Réville, while objecting to S. Matthew's narrative on the ground that Pilate would hardly be in a humour to grant the Jews' request, finds no difficulty in supporting his own version by suggesting that Pilate not only sent the guards, but was a party to the removal of the Body and to the bribery of his soldiers. Why Pilate's ill-humour should be an argument against the Gospel, but not against the modern critic, it will be difficult to say. And, further, why should the Sanhedrin have taken the circuitous method of guarding the place from which they had removed the Body? And most of all, why did not the Sanhedrin produce the decisive evidence against the Apostolic preaching? That nobody investigated the grave is contradicted by all the evidences, and is the most baseless and arbitrary assertion. That reluctance to incur legal contamination would have kept the Jew away from the neighbourhood of



the corpse is surely answered by the fact that S. Mary Magdalene did not hesitate. Surely distrust and animosity might act or prompt others to investigate when self-interest so plainly demanded it. When the question is asked, Did it occur to the acute and anxious Tetrarch Antipas to establish or calm his fears by disproving the resurrection of the Baptist by an examination of his grave? it is obvious to remark that the cases are not parallel. Antipas had before him the solid fact of a wonder-working person for whose activities and power he attempted to account by the supposition of Resurrection. If his explanation was wrong and could be refuted, the fact of the wonder-working person still remained. But in the case of the Resurrection of Christ there was, for the outer general world, no solid, tangible fact at all; no wonder-working Person to be seen. There was nothing but an asserted Resurrection and empty grave. Now here, if the grave could be shown to be occupied still, there would have been the conclusive evidence to a Jew that the asserted Resurrection had never taken place.

## VII

But while the emptiness of the grave is shown by accumulative evidence to be one of the primitive facts in the Resurrection-story, it is equally certain that

this was not the cause of the disciples' faith. When a critic<sup>1</sup> tells us that the fact of the empty tomb awakened in the friends of Jesus a belief that He was risen, he may be answered in terms already quoted from other recent independent criticism. If the Gospels declare that the grave was empty, they declare with no less concurrent voices that the impression produced by the fact was not, with one exception, belief in the Resurrection. It is difficult to see why their testimony to the one fact should be accepted if their testimony to the other is ignored. Nor can a criticism which makes such distinctions be acquitted of arbitrariness and subjectivity. No doubt such a criticism is very necessary if the Resurrection-belief is to be accounted for on a purely non-Christian basis, but it is contradicted by the reiterated witness of the Evangelists.<sup>2</sup> According to the Evangelists, the fact of the empty grave created no belief in the Resurrection in the case either of S. Mary Magdalene, or of the other women, or of S. Peter.

Thus the oft-repeated expression that the faith of the Christian Church is founded on an empty grave is one which requires explanation.<sup>3</sup> The Easter faith did not really spring from the empty grave, but from the self-manifestation of the risen Lord.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *E.g.* Réville, ii. p. 465.

<sup>2</sup> See chap. i. on the Evidence of the Evangelists.

<sup>3</sup> Dobschütz, *Ostern und Pfingsten*.

<sup>4</sup> Steude, *Die Auferstehung*, p. 108.

The three subjects just considered, the fact of the third day, the fact of Jerusalem as the locality for the first appearances, the fact of the empty sepulchre, are clearly intimately connected. If one is true, the others follow with it.

1. If our Lord was seen within three days after His Death, then certainly the first appearances must have taken place in Jerusalem and not in Galilee. The return of the disciples to Galilee within one complete day from Good Friday night is what no criticism will establish nor any sober criticism maintain. It is certain that the disciples were still in Jerusalem. Moreover, if the third day was the actual date, then the question of the empty grave becomes determined. The visits to the grave are natural and necessary: the emptiness essential to the coherence of the whole. It cannot be said in this case that the distance in Galilee rendered investigation impossible.

2. Similarly, if the first appearance of the risen Lord occurred in Jerusalem, it must have happened within a very brief space of time. For the disciples would have no reason to linger in the city, and their visit would in no case extend beyond the limits of the festival. And of course being in Jerusalem, visits would naturally be paid to the garden grave.

3. Or, once again, if the emptiness of the sepulchre

be an historic fact, then plainly the inference will be that the interval of time was brief, and the third day reassumes its probability; nor will it then be doubted that the first appearances are the series in Jerusalem.

## CHAPTER V

### S. PAUL'S PERSONAL EVIDENCE TO THE RESURRECTION

BESIDE the evidence of the Evangelists to the Resurrection, there is the evidence of S. Paul. It is evidence of the most impressive kind. It is recorded in documents whose authenticity is practically unquestioned, and whose date places them in the forefront of all the New Testament writings. It is evidence differing in character from that of the Evangelists, for it is not the evidence of one already convinced of the moral uniqueness and glory of the personality of his Lord and Master. It is, on the contrary, the evidence of a man who became a disciple in consequence of that Resurrection to which he testifies. What he saw effected his conversion. Belief in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ has been ascribed in the case of the original Apostles to fond reverential affection glorifying the past. Certainly it cannot be ascribed to such motives in the case of the Rabbi Saul, chief among

the strenuous opponents of the Christian Religion. Consequently there is in his evidence a peculiar momentousness.

## I

Recent attempts to explain S. Paul's conversion by other causes than that to which he himself ascribes it may be classified as follows. Either the explanation is sought in the peculiarities of the Apostle's physical constitution and temperament; or else it is sought on the intellectual side of his nature. And as the two can only be theoretically separated, they will alike be considered to have contributed their quota to the great achievement. Sometimes the explanation is said to be found principally in the physical department, at other times principally in the intellectual.

1. Among those who seek the causes of S. Paul's conversion chiefly on the physical side, the principal exponent is to be found in France. A considerable period has elapsed since Renan produced his estimate of S. Paul, but no extremer exposition of the physical theory has since appeared. Indeed, Renan's criticism was so complete a *reductio ad absurdum* that naturalism has been compelled to seek explanations elsewhere. According to Renan, every step in the journey towards Damascus awakened in Saul of Tarsus pain-

ful perplexities. He shrank from the odious functions of an executioner. He did not wish to advance. He was exhausted by fatigue. He had inflamed eyes; probably incipient ophthalmia. The hot, arid region produces most debilitating effects: dangerous fevers accompanied by delirium are common and sudden in these latitudes. A sudden stroke deprived him of remaining consciousness, and threw him senseless to the ground. There may have been a thunderstorm to complete the effect, although the author does not consider this indispensable. But the violence of the storms in that neighbourhood is phenomenal. Anyhow, cerebral commotion set in and the incident of Damascus was achieved.

Perhaps a reply as suitable as any may be found in the words of one who certainly will not be accused of excessive attachment to the convictions of Christendom.

‘What shall we say of the mighty vision that originated these stupendous results? Shall we take the view of the modern scientific young man, and lecture the great Apostle on the folly of that indiscreet journey to Damascus at noontide, when his nerves were a little overwrought after that unpleasant incident about Stephen? Shall we say it was all ophthalmia and indigestion—that flash of blinding light, those unforgettable words, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?”—all a mere vision? Is a fact



that changed the destinies of Europe to be put aside with the epithet "mere"?<sup>1</sup>

Another independent critic writes to the same effect:—'The naturalistic explanation of all these miracles, the thunder and lightning into which the apparition and the words of Jesus were transformed; the blinding of Paul by the lightning or the fear; his cure by the cold hands of old Ananias . . . (etc.)—these exploded feats of interpretation we may aptly pass by. It is obvious that they contradict the meaning of our author.'<sup>2</sup>

2. Far deeper and more serious is the endeavour to explain S. Paul's conversion as the outcome of intellectual perplexity. The best exponent of this theory is found among the more solid theologians of Germany. From the words, 'It is hard for thee to kick against the goads,' Pfeleiderer assumes that S. Paul had been struggling for some time in a state of mental uncertainty.<sup>3</sup> He must have heard the defences which Christians made on their trial; and the arguments, confirmed by their character and fortitude, could not but disturb his intellectual assurances. That he began to be uncertain about the real meaning of Scripture is, we are told, 'in the highest degree probable.'<sup>4</sup> And that his endeavours to secure justification before God by obedience to the law had not

<sup>1</sup> *Kernel and Husk*, p. 231. <sup>2</sup> Zeller, *Acts*, i. 288; similarly Baur.

<sup>3</sup> *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 34 ff. <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 36.

brought him peace, achievement having miserably failed to be commensurate with aspiration, is manifest from his description in the Epistle to the Romans of the inward conflict in man.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, misgivings of increasingly serious nature, beyond his power either to satisfy or disperse, haunted his tender conscience and penetrated as goads into his soul.<sup>2</sup> How earnestly he must have prayed for a solution of the enigma, for a satisfaction of his doubt! His excitable, nervous temperament made things worse. He was (says the writer, drawing, however, entirely on his own imagination) 'violently agitated and torn by the most terrible doubts.'<sup>3</sup> And these inward conditions, combined with the urgency of decision and the scorching, blinding heat of the desert, produced an ecstatic state in which imagination was taken for reality.

This is the prevalent type of rationalistic explanation of S. Paul's conversion. He set out, we are told, one day on an errand of persecution, when 'the reaction suddenly and irresistibly came upon him.'<sup>4</sup> He had, we are informed, long been the weary victim of intellectual doubts and fears. In such a man as Saul of Tarsus, with such a temperament, the struggle between his own religious experiences and the Jewish tradition could have but one result. It led him inevitably to the vision of that Jesus whom he had

<sup>1</sup> *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 39.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 43.

<sup>4</sup> Jülicher, *Introd. N.T.*, p. 35.

striven so hard to believe a false prophet and a traitor, throned in heavenly glory.<sup>1</sup>

Such is the latest form of opinion.

Now it may be said at once that, whatever plausibility the modern naturalistic explanations possess, they instantly lose it when we turn to the Apostle's own impressions. The theory of intellectual perplexity working on a highly wrought and susceptible disposition, of mental problems finding their solution in the answers of the Christian Faith, is, of course, when abstracted from the facts of the case, a perfectly conceivable theory, but only so long as it is abstracted from the facts.

## II

But we possess the account and the explanation of the contemporary historian S. Luke. We may do well to gather the evidence on S. Paul's conversion from the various pages of the Acts of the Apostles. From S. Luke's own narrative, and from his reports of S. Paul's own words, we form the following conception of the course of ideas and incidents.

Educated in the Sacred City, the heart of Jewish religion, in the most favourable circumstances, by one of Israel's most distinguished and gifted teachers, Saul of Tarsus imbibed Gamaliel's earnestness but not

<sup>1</sup> Jülicher, *Introd. N.T.*, p. 36.

his gentleness, and emerged, instructed 'according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers,'<sup>1</sup> a typical and exemplary Pharisee. His estimate of Christianity is plain. He abhorred and detested it. He verily thought within himself that he 'ought to do many things contrary to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth.'<sup>2</sup> His first known appearance in public life is at the trial of S. Stephen. Saul's estimate of Stephen was probably identical with that of the deacon's accusers: he had spoken blasphemous words against the holy place and the law.<sup>3</sup> For, if he had uttered the opinions ascribed to him, that 'Jesus of Nazareth would destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered us,'<sup>4</sup> what else could a Pharisee think? What penalty could be considered too severe for one who thus insulted the recipients of Revelation, and, what was worse, that Revelation itself? The defence which Stephen made was not calculated to alter Saul's opinion, or to lead him to view more leniently the advocate of theories so ruinous to Pharisaic exclusiveness. Then the record of S. Stephen's dying words is followed by the statement that Saul was consenting to his death.<sup>5</sup> He was no mere spectator; still less was he favourably impressed: he was severely concurrent in the dreadful scene. It has been asserted, indeed, that S. Stephen's martyrdom must

<sup>1</sup> Acts xxii. 3.<sup>2</sup> Acts xxvi. 9.<sup>3</sup> Acts vi. 13.<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 14.<sup>5</sup> Acts viii. 1.

have awakened misgivings in the persecutor's heart. But all the evidence points the other way. Did the constancy of victims necessarily convert the mind or touch the heart of the mediæval inquisitor? According to the historian of Saul's career, that martyr death was only one among many. He was 'breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord.'<sup>1</sup> According to the Apostle's reported speech, 'many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I persecuted them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme.'<sup>2</sup> Here, condensed in a single sentence, is a whole chronicle of persecution. S. Stephen's was not the only Christian death that Saul had witnessed. He was stamping out the Christian Faith, partly by extermination and partly by forced recantation. This was often done, and in every synagogue in Jerusalem. But Jerusalem itself was not extensive enough to absorb his exterminating energies. He asked permission of the authorities to extend the sphere of his merciless operations to Damascus.<sup>3</sup> Observe, he took the initiative in this. He sought permission; he did not wait to be invited. Will it be said that he plunged himself more deeply in order to drown rebellious thoughts and profound misgivings?

<sup>1</sup> Acts ix. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xxvi. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Acts xxvi. 11, 12; ix. 1, 2.

That is fiction pure and simple. The whole significance of the historian's account demonstrates that this was not so. Nor is it psychologically conceivable in so transparently sincere and true a nature as that of Saul.<sup>1</sup> Loyalty to conviction here, if anywhere, was the very life of his soul. There is no trace, no shadow of misgiving, as he issues from Jerusalem on that momentous expedition.

The incidents of S. Paul's conversion are told three times in the Acts of the Apostles.<sup>2</sup> The first account is given by S. Luke in the historical order of events. The other two are reports by the same author of speeches by S. Paul; the one spoken on the steps of the Castle of Jerusalem, the other in the Court of Cæsarea before Agrippa. In these three narratives there are, as is well known, divergences both in the impression upon S. Paul's companions, and in the heavenly utterances addressed to him. Of these divergences much was formerly made, but less at the present time. Perhaps it is that a study of the phenomena of evidence has made it obvious that divergences in detail will often corroborate the substance of the case in question. At any rate, writers who certainly will not be charged with holding a brief for orthodox convictions are often found admitting that the divergences in the Acts, so far from compromising the account, do really confirm it. One

<sup>1</sup> See p. 120.

<sup>2</sup> Acts ix., xxii., xxvi.



critical writer describes them as 'slight discrepancies . . . easily and naturally explicable, and valuable as showing that the accounts have not been arbitrarily harmonised.'<sup>1</sup> Much to the same effect another writer says that their explanation lies in their insignificance.<sup>2</sup> They do not seriously affect the central reality: they belong to the circumference of the narrative. They are concerned rather with the impression produced on the bystanders than with anything else. And the report of these impressions on S. Paul's companions may easily have varied, because the impressions themselves may well have varied also. If there be any relationship between revelation and receptiveness, if apprehension varies from man to man, these diversities on the fringe of the central fact are precisely what a true psychology would lead us to expect; and significant enough as recorded by Luke the physician. So far from discrediting the central assertion, they rather confirm it.

The main difficulty presented in the narrative itself on this question of external reality lies in the impression produced upon S. Paul's companions. 'The men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.'<sup>3</sup> Are we then intended to understand that the risen Lord was visible only to S. Paul? If that

<sup>1</sup> *Kernel and Husk*, p. 230.

<sup>2</sup> Sabatier, *L'Apôtre Paul*, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Acts ix. 7.



were the case, what becomes of the objective reality of the appearance? Certainly the very form of the words 'seeing no man' implies that by S. Paul himself our Lord was actually seen. Yet how can the same presence be real to one and invisible to others at the same place, simultaneously? Such is the difficulty.

But the difficulty is not really half so serious as men have sometimes made it seem. S. Paul's companions were obviously all conscious to some extent of a bewildering supernatural occurrence. If they saw no man, they 'stood speechless hearing a voice.' If they could place no accurate interpretation on the sound, they were well aware of its unwonted nature. And this distinction between himself and them agrees perfectly with the profoundest principles of spiritual insight and perception. If it be true that the eye sees precisely what it brings with it the power to see, perception will vary with receptivity. That the perfect sincerity and single-minded intensity of S. Paul should imply a power of penetration and recognition of the true character of the external apparition confronting him is, on religious principles, most natural. No doubt it will be said that to talk in this way is to take refuge in a province inaccessible to argument. But there are things in heaven and earth not accounted for in our philosophy. And there is something awfully true in the principle

taught in the old Hebrew story of the Prophet and his servant. The servant stood in a region of problems and perplexities, incompetent to penetrate until the Master interceded: I pray Thee open the young man's eyes that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses of fire and chariots of fire round about Elisha. The fact that S. Paul alone, and not his companions, saw the person of the risen Lord does not really militate against the objective character of the manifestation. It is certain that no merely inward mental vision will satisfy the statement of S. Luke. For the accessories of the appearance, the light, the splendour, the sounds, the voice, are manifest to S. Paul's companions as well as to himself.

But beneath all outward differences is the substantial unity of the accounts. All three narratives really form a perfectly harmonious picture, that Saul beheld an external vision of the Christ in His risen glory; that it came to him suddenly and from without; that it was so far from his thoughts and anticipations that he utterly failed to recognise or realise who it was that appeared before him; that it was only in answer to his bewildered exclamation, 'Who art Thou, Lord?' that he was told, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest'; that he trembled and was astonished, and in utter helplessness appealed

for further knowledge, 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?'

Obviously, then, the whole incident is presented as a complete reversal of his anticipations and convictions.

### III

So far, then, the account and the explanation as given by the historian and biographer S. Luke. But we are enabled to go much further than this. We have the references to his conversion given by S. Paul himself in the course of his letters.

In his first letter to the Corinthians he bases his apostolic authority on his vision of the risen Christ. 'Am I not an Apostle?' he writes, 'have I not seen Jesus Christ?' The force of this is evident when we remember that an Apostle was expressly designed to be a witness of the Resurrection. S. Paul here claims to fulfil that condition. He has seen Jesus Christ since He rose from the dead. The occasion to which he refers is unquestionably his conversion.

We have, then, to collect from S. Paul's Epistles his evidence as to the nature of that appearance of Christ outside Damascus. This evidence is of two kinds:

1. First, all that points to the external or objective character of our Lord's self-manifestation to him. He had seen Jesus Christ. And the outward reality

of that sight is suggested or implied or asserted along several lines of thought in the Apostle's various writings.

(1) On one occasion, for instance, he distinctly asserts the objective character of the revelation of Christ's truth to him. It was no process of human instruction, still less of inward reflection. 'I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.'<sup>1</sup> And to confirm the assertion, that this revelation came to him from without, he appeals to the facts of his persecuting severity against the Church and of his whole-hearted devotion to the Hebrew faith. 'Ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it; and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.'<sup>2</sup> His condition was that of a man unreservedly devoted to and wholly absorbed in the Jews' religion. Out of this condition he was summoned: God called him by His grace, called him at a definite moment which can be no other than the moment outside Damascus.<sup>3</sup> There is no slow and gradual transition, no delicate evolution of thought. It is abrupt and from above; terminating the period of zeal for the traditions of his fathers, and diverting

<sup>1</sup> Galatians i. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Galatians i. 13, 14.

<sup>3</sup> Meyer.

him into an entirely new path of activity and conviction. To quote an independent paraphrase of his language :—

‘My early education is a proof that I did not receive the Gospel from man. I was brought up in a rigid school of ritualism directly opposed to the liberty of the Gospel. I was from age and temper a staunch adherent of the principles of that school. Acting upon this, I relentlessly persecuted the Christian brotherhood. No human agency therefore could have brought about the change. It required a direct interposition from God.’<sup>1</sup>

(2) Again, he describes himself as an untimely birth.<sup>2</sup> It was no natural process of ordinary development which brought him from one sphere of existence into another. He was suddenly, forcibly ejected, in an abnormal way, all immature, into another order of life and thought.<sup>3</sup> Can any metaphor more appropriately represent an abrupt transition; no normal consummation of inward development, but a result wrought by external violence?

(3) And further, with reference to his conversion, S. Paul says, ‘I was apprehended by Christ Jesus.’<sup>4</sup> I was apprehended, that is captured, arrested by Him. As S. Chrysostom says, S. Paul describes the divine desire

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Lightfoot's *Galatians*, i. 13 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Sabatier, *L'Apôtre Paul*, p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. xv.

<sup>4</sup> Phil. iii. 12.

to capture him, and his own wanderings and flight from God.<sup>1</sup> It is not in the least a converging of man towards God in a process of gradual enlightenment by which the distance is decreased. On the contrary, it is man in flight and God pursuing. 'I was arrested by Jesus Christ.'<sup>2</sup>

(4) So again he describes himself as a captive led in triumph through the nations by Christ.<sup>3</sup> It was passive experience rather than active co-operation; still less independent criticism and willing approach to Christ on the part of Saul the Pharisee. He was taken captive by Christ in the midst of his Jewish convictions, and exhibited to the world with new convictions.

(5) Elsewhere again he describes himself as one 'who was before a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious,' but 'obtained mercy because he did it ignorantly, in unbelief.'<sup>4</sup> There was an arrogant contemptuousness in his previous estimate of Christianity, but it was the outcome of ignorance and unbelief. He was not sinning against the light. So far from there being the least suggestion that he ever had misgivings, these words appear distinctly to preclude it.

(6) And further still, S. Paul bases on the fact of

<sup>1</sup> *Hom.* xi. on Philippians.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. B. Weiss, *Manual of Introduction*, i. p. 153.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. ii. 14.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Tim. i. 13.

the Resurrection of Christ his belief in the resurrection of the dead. But the validity of the inference requires the objective reality of Christ's appearance to him. No internal illumination, no merely mental vision of Christ could be the basis upon which to build an argument of the physical resurrection of Christian men.

(7) Moreover, there is definite distinctness in the character ascribed to this Damascus appearance, which separates it from all ordinary dreams and visions.<sup>1</sup> Undoubtedly S. Paul had dreams. He speaks of 'visions and revelations of the Lord.'<sup>2</sup> Of one particular vision he adds that whether it was in the body or out of the body he cannot tell. And the consequence is that this statement has been utilised to discredit the objective reality of the facts at his conversion. And strangely enough, one eminent writer<sup>3</sup> at least would persuade us that S. Paul was here alluding to his conversion. It is important, therefore, to give the passage more careful study. In this passage in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians S. Paul is appealing to the Church in virtue of his apostolic claims. He has just recorded his sufferings for the faith. He next claims to have been the recipient of wondrous spiritual experiences in the form of visions and revelation given him by the Lord. He says that he knew

<sup>1</sup> Knowling, *Witness of the Epistles*.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. xii.

<sup>3</sup> Graetz, *History of the Jews*, ii. p. 227.



a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, whether in the body or out of the body he cannot tell, God knoweth, caught up into Paradise and permitted to hear unspeakable words which it is not lawful for man to utter. Of these wondrous revelations bestowed on him, assuredly he might glory were he so disposed. But he speaks of them with reluctance and the deepest hesitation. These were exalted experiences in the privacy of his own soul; they cannot be dragged out into the glare and publicity of the day to be criticised by the ordinary world. They form no part of his Apostolic mission; they are purely incidental and private experiences. And with that passing reference he turns away from them as too sacred to be unveiled. He will not glory in these, but only in his infirmities.

Now it is, or ought to be, sufficiently plain that there can be no reference here to the incidents of his conversion. There are chronological reasons in themselves decisive. For the date here given is fourteen years ago. 'This date,' says Dean Stanley, 'could not have been his conversion, which was more than twenty years before this.'<sup>1</sup> But what is more significant is the whole drift of the passage and the Apostle's attitude. The visions and revelations mentioned here are alluded to with reticence and obvious

<sup>1</sup> Stanley's *Commentary on Corinthians*; cf. also Kling in Lange on *Corinthians*.

reluctance to dwell on such purely private themes. But that is never the Apostle's feeling in reference to his conversion. That he makes the subject of at least two public speeches, besides other appeals and allusions. 'Am I not an Apostle?' he exclaims; 'have I not seen Jesus Christ?' There his Apostleship is based on the fact of that appearance of Jesus Christ which occurred at his conversion. To be reticent about that which formed the basis of his mission and gave him his authority was impossible. We see, then, how completely S. Paul separated between the subjective dreams and the objective appearance which effected his conversion. There is the clearest distinction in the Apostle's mind between the character of these two classes of occurrences.

Indeed, one may fairly say that capacity for subjective experiences does not constitute incompetence to testify to outward facts. If S. Paul had both inward and outward experiences, there is no reason why he should not be perfectly able to distinguish accurately between them. He who frankly says of one class of experiences that he cannot tell the physical conditions of their occurrence surely shows a discernment and a caution which increases confidence in him. 'It shows that the Apostle knew perfectly well how to distinguish between a state of ecstasy and a state of consciousness.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Neander.

No hint whatever of faltering or misgiving, no shadow of suspicion of the possible unreality of what he wrote down, could have haunted him who records in such terms as S. Paul employs his reminiscences of that very Damascus journey. To describe the man who so writes as 'violently agitated and torn by the most terrible doubts' is to contradict his plainest declarations. To picture him as filled with intellectual perplexity, and praying passionately for indication of the divine will to determine whether he should remain a Jew or become a Christian, is to draw pictures which have no serious relationship with the mind of S. Paul, as S. Paul himself describes it. And it is reassuring to remember that many able modern critics have come to acknowledge that S. Paul's conversion was sudden, abrupt, and not the slow experience of intellectual growth. 'S. Paul,' says Sabatier, 'knows absolutely nothing of a gradual process in his conversion to the Faith.'<sup>1</sup> The recollection of it which he bears through life is of a startling event which overtook him in the midst of Jewish convictions, and flung him in spite of himself into a completely new path.

'He was not conscious of any exertion of his own judgment,' writes Weizsäcker,<sup>2</sup> 'of any independent examination of the Faith or decision upon it. He knows of no transition stage in which his mind hesitated and questioned. On the contrary, the

<sup>1</sup> *L'Apôtre Paul*, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> *Apostolic Age*, i. p. 82.

period of persecution was immediately followed by that of his belief and Apostleship. The revelation which he received was no mere confirmation<sup>1</sup> of a tendency already present in his thought, it was not the last stage of a gradually emerging faith; but he remembered it as breaking in upon him suddenly and unexpectedly and at once deciding everything for him.' 'All attempts to show the probability of a gradual psychological preparation for this sudden change, due to the freer tendency of his teacher Gamaliel, the scriptural arguments of the Nazarenes, or the impression of the joyful death of Stephen and other martyrs, are destroyed by the Apostle's account in Galatians, the obvious tendency of which is to support his assertion that he did not learn his Gospel from man, but received it by revelation, by proving in the first place that in his fanatical zeal for the Law and persecution he was quite inaccessible to human influences of this kind, when God of His own free pleasure chose him for Himself in order to reveal His Son to him.'<sup>2</sup>

2. But to say that the manifestation of the risen Christ to S. Paul was external is not to deny that it was inward also.

Elsewhere S. Paul writes: 'when it pleased God

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Meyer on Acts ix. 1, and B. Weiss, *Manual*.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. i. 12, 13. Cf. Bernhard Weiss, *Manual of Introduction*, i. p. 153.

. . . to reveal His Son *in* me, that I might preach Him among the heathen.'<sup>1</sup> Upon this a recent writer remarks: 'He seems to intimate that it was not an ordinary seeing and hearing with the physical senses, but an inward experience within his soul.'<sup>2</sup> But surely this is an unnecessary alternative. The inward and the outward revelation of God to man do not exclude each other; they correspond. Regarded in one aspect, the revelation of Christ to S. Paul was an inner experience. It illuminated the secret depths of his moral and spiritual being; it explained to him the nature of Christian truth. It enabled him to comprehend its profound significance. But there is nothing in this inward character of Christ's self-revealing to S. Paul which contradicts or excludes the outward reality of the appearance near the gate of Damascus. Why should not the outward create the inward? The objective reality causes the subjective impression. The outward revelation may well be the condition of the inward, essential to it, although valueless without it. That the recipient of these experiences should dwell sometimes on their outward and sometimes on their inward aspect may be attributable to the special purpose which he has in view. And can we not partly understand why on this occasion the Apostle dwells on the inward illumination rather than on the external incidents of

<sup>1</sup> Galatians i. 15, 16.

<sup>2</sup> Pfeiderer, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 33.

his conversion? For he is speaking of the truth, the message, the Gospel which he was commissioned to deliver to the pagan world. Accordingly, what is most important is the substance of the Christian revelation as inwardly received and understood by him. And to this he naturally, for the moment, subordinates the miraculous, outward circumstances by which the truth was brought home to his perception. Nevertheless, while concerned chiefly with the subjective impression, he does not forget to ascribe it to an objective cause. For he expressly speaks of a divine personal intervention of God revealing His Son in him. The origin of the Apostle's thoughts on religion is here distinctly ascribed to supernatural illumination, and not to his own unassisted mental activity.<sup>1</sup> And it is not without significance that he mentions the locality, and says that after an interval he returned again to Damascus. Accordingly it is satisfactory to remember that even Strauss, while recognising that S. Paul in this passage 'lays the main stress on the internal element, and conceives of the seeing and hearing of Christ as accompanied by the rising up within his mind of the true knowledge of Him as the Son of God,' yet adds: 'It is certain that in doing so he considered the ascended Christ as really and externally present, the appearance as in the full sense an objective one.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Sabatier, *L'Apôtre Paul*, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> *New Life*, i. p. 417.



But of course to recognise the external reality of the appearance is not to deny the need of inward preparation in S. Paul himself. On the contrary, this is what has been already implied and asserted. The whole drift of our discussion on the different effect of the same incidents upon S. Paul and upon his companions involves the absolute need of preparation. S. Paul must have been in a receptive state. Otherwise the outward revelation could not have produced its proper result upon him any more than it did upon his companions. That is true. Only while we acknowledge the necessity of receptiveness, we must not thereby imagine that such receptiveness can dispense with the external manifestation; nor think it possible to explain the whole event by emotional or psychological considerations. That is precisely the confusion and want of balance and proportion with which much recent criticism is seriously afflicted.

It is remarkable that Pfleiderer himself, after his elaborated attempt to account for the conversion of S. Paul on purely inward grounds, reaches the following conclusion:—

‘However, whether we are satisfied with this psychologically explained version, or prefer to regard an objective Christophany in addition necessary to explain the conversion of Paul, it remains in either case certain that it was God who in the soul of



Paul caused a light to shine, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.'<sup>1</sup>

That S. Paul's endeavours before conversion to secure inner peace by complete compliance with the requirements of moral law had utterly failed, is probably most true. The wonderful analysis of human incompetence to fulfil its aspirations and the requirement of God's law given in the Epistle to the Romans, is not only an analysis in which self is included; it is the manifest outcome of personal experience. But to say that S. Paul, after all his strenuous longings to fulfil the Law, found that law, because unachieved and unfulfilled by him, converted into his accuser and turned into a ministration of death, does not the least imply the falsity of the Hebrew religion, still less the truth of the Christian claims. The loyal, earnest Pharisee might well accuse himself for his defections from the ideal, rather than the ideal whose beauty he saw and whose demands he acknowledged. It may even be that the sense of failure to reach his ideal drove him into the labours of exterminating the Christian Church, thereby to acquire additional merit and so to compensate, were it possible, for failures of which he was painfully conscious within. But no condemnation which the Law pronounced upon his unregenerate instincts or

<sup>1</sup> Pfleiderer, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 43.

imperfections could alter the fact that the Law was undeniably holy and good, and deserving, and indeed eliciting, his reverence. Nothing in all this could give the slightest hint of seeking or obtaining elsewhere beyond the limits of Israel what he could not secure within. The fault was his, not that of God's revelation. Nothing in all this suggested that the Church could give what the chosen people did not possess. That after an external manifestation of the risen Christ, inner reflection revealed to him the true nature of that which he destroyed, is intelligible. The irony of the situation became plain. But it was the outward appearing which produced the inner change. No attempt to explain S. Paul's conversion as the projection of inner spiritual conflicts on the outer world can ever permanently satisfy intelligent inquiry. In the nature of the case it seems impossible. The spiritual discontent of this master mind may indeed have contributed much to his receptiveness when once the external vision came. But no failure to achieve his own ideal could conceivably have converted for him 'the false and traitorous Galilæan' into the risen Christ and the Lord of Glory.

## IV

This separate analysis of the account given by the historian S. Luke, and of the account given in

S. Paul's own writings, is valuable because the two lines of evidence are mutually confirmatory. Substantially the conceptions of the conversion given by both are identical. The form into which the historian and the writer of letters have cast their narrative is different, but the essential, underlying fact is not. Both alike convey the thought of outward manifestation and inward enlightenment.

Now the value which men will place upon this double line of testimony will greatly depend upon their presuppositions. The final decision of the question certainly lies beyond the limits of purely historical investigation. Any one who admits no miracle, who denies the reality of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, will also be unable to admit the miraculous apparition of the risen Jesus on the way to Damascus.<sup>1</sup> As Meyer, speaking of certain members of a critical school, observes, since one of them proceeds from the postulates of pantheistic, and another from those of theistic rationalism, since both agree in starting from the negation of a miracle, the consequence is that 'they cannot present the conversion of Saul otherwise than under the notion of an immanent process of his individual mental life.'<sup>2</sup>

If we compare together the modern critical explanation of S. Paul's conversion on purely naturalistic grounds with the explanation which he

<sup>1</sup> Zeller, *Acts*, i. p. 291.

<sup>2</sup> Meyer on *Acts* ix.

himself and the author of the Acts have given, it seems to us impossible not to feel the superiority of the New Testament account. The explanation which constructs S. Paul's conversion on subjective grounds, whether physical or intellectual, or both combined, is arbitrary in its treatment of the recorded facts, and accepts and rejects on purely *a priori* considerations. It does not seem in the least adequate to explain the change of life and character, the persisting to the bitter end without a shadow of misgiving, the moral grandeur of the type which is produced. The conflicting theories of the critical explanations, the novel versions produced year after year, the manner in which a view once popular recedes into obscurity before another which replaces it, the misgivings, the concessions, the tendency to leave the matter ultimately unexplained which in itself brings back the possibility of the supernatural, the admission that after all perhaps the Almighty had a hand in it—all these are facts in favour of the Apostolic explanation, against which there is nothing ultimately to be said except on *a priori* considerations.

## CHAPTER VI

### S. PAUL'S SUMMARY OF THE EVIDENCE

THE earliest existing summary of the evidence for the Resurrection is that given by S. Paul in 1 Corinthians xv. We may date that letter A.D. 57. But this date of the letter does not really, as some critics assume, give us the date of the evidence. S. Paul records in A.D. 57 information received a considerable period before. For in the Epistle to the Galatians,<sup>1</sup> he tells us that his first visit to Jerusalem as a believer was three years after his conversion. If his conversion occurred, as Harnack thinks, in A.D. 30, or as Clemen thinks, in A.D. 31,<sup>2</sup> then S. Paul was in Jerusalem on a visit to S. Peter (with whom he stayed a fortnight) in A.D. 33 or 34, that is to say, about four years after our Lord's Ascension. We are not told the subjects of conversation during those fourteen days, but it is incredible that the Resurrection should not have been prominent among them. It is significant also

<sup>1</sup> Galatians i. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Clemen, *Paulus*.

that, in S. Paul's summary of the evidence, at the head of all stands S. Peter's name. He must have heard from S. Peter's own lips, during that Jerusalem visit, the Apostle's experience. Here then we have recorded in A.D. 57 the outcome of a conversation held in A.D. 33-34, evidence by implication derived from S. Peter's own lips, only some four years after the Ascension. Out of Jerusalem itself, from the inner circle of older Apostles, comes this evidence which S. Paul here places on record.

S. Paul's account of the evidence for the Resurrection is as follows : that the risen Christ was seen by

1. Kephass ;
2. the Twelve ;
3. above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep ;
4. James ;
5. all the Apostles.

This, apart from the reference to his own personal evidence, which has been already considered, is S. Paul's account. There are five distinct occasions.

Now it seems wonderful that any one reading this brief list should imagine that S. Paul is doing anything else than giving a summary of the evidence. It would at least be difficult to condense the statements into fewer words. There seems to be a studied brevity about it. Just sufficient is given to indicate

the sources from which further information may be derived—just sufficient and no more. And remembering that the Apostle was writing about eight-and-twenty years after the Resurrection had taken place, and during the lifetime of the chosen witnesses, this was enough to direct the inquirer to the persons who actually saw the risen Lord. But surely to describe S. Paul as giving an exhaustive account, or as concerned to record all details of which he knew, is to invent a picture strangely at variance with the bare list actually written down by him.

If we next proceed to analyse the list itself, there are various features which impress us.

One is that all the witnesses mentioned by name are men. It has been constantly noted that S. Paul omits all reference to S. Mary Magdalene. Why, it has been asked, should her witness be ignored, when S. John asserts that she was the first to see Him after He was risen? Various reasons for the omission have been given. Some have thought to explain it by a reference to the words, 'I suffer not a woman to teach.'<sup>1</sup> But authoritative ministrations in the Church are not the same as witness to personal experience; and if the Lord appeared to women, certainly S. Paul would acknowledge that they had a message to deliver. Moreover, there is no reason to suppose that the five hundred brethren were exclusively men. Others have

<sup>1</sup> 1 Timothy ii. 12.



thought that the list was confined to official witnesses. But the five hundred were not of apostolic rank. The real principle of selection is neither of these. There is another reason which appears more probable. When S. Paul was concerned in summarising the evidence for the advantage of the Corinthian controversialists, he would naturally select names whose reputation was not unknown in Corinth. Now Peter was well known everywhere, but especially in Corinth; for there was a party in that city which rallied round his name. Their party cry was, 'I am of Kephas.'<sup>1</sup> The mention of the Twelve needs no explanation; every Christian would be familiar with the official title of the original Apostles of the Lord. The mention of James, the Lord's brother, is also natural: he could scarcely fail to be known from the fact of his relationship. And the five hundred brethren might well be appealed to, if not for their reputation, yet at least for their numerical strength, and from the fact that more than half of them were still alive, and therefore accessible as the test and proof of S. Paul's assertions. While concerned with condensing into the briefest summary the names of these variously distinguished witnesses, S. Paul omits to mention certain women, whom perhaps he had not met, and whom also the Corinthians probably would not know.<sup>2</sup> And this is,

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. i. 12.

<sup>2</sup> See Gess, *Das Dogma von Christi Person und Werk* (1887), p. xvii.

in the circumstance, perfectly natural. The principle of selection is that which would instinctively govern a prudent teacher. He adduces the evidence best calculated to effect his purpose. The rest he passes by. There is, however, in this one obvious difficulty. Why does S. Paul omit S. John? Still, although it is hard to account for this omission, unless it is that no appearance to S. John alone is anywhere recorded, and he is merged in the general evidence of the Twelve, yet this principle of selection does account for the names which are actually chosen. It should also be noted that if S. Paul mentions S. Peter and S. James, these are the two apostles in particular whom he tells us that he conferred with in his visit to Jerusalem three years after his conversion.

The attempt to harmonise S. Paul's list of Resurrection-appearances with the Gospel narratives is undoubtedly difficult. The appearance to the five hundred brethren is nowhere else distinctly mentioned. The number would suggest that it occurred in Galilee. For we cannot forget that at the first Whitsuntide<sup>1</sup> the number of names in Jerusalem was about one hundred and twenty. An assembly of five hundred disciples in Jerusalem seems hardly probable. It seems very likely indeed that we have here recorded the meeting with the main body of disciples, which the order to go into Galilee was intended to prepare. If

<sup>1</sup> Acts i. 15.

this explanation be correct, then we have in S. Paul a recognition of a Galilæan series and of a Jerusalem series of appearances. The five occasions in S. Paul's list may probably be divided, geographically, into four in Jerusalem and one in Galilee. We may notice also in this incident of the 'more than five hundred' the Apostle's moderation. He is careful to notice that in the interval between the Resurrection and the date of his letter, some of these five hundred witnesses had fallen asleep, but that at any rate 'the greater part,' more than half, 'remain unto this present.' As the Apostle was writing less than thirty years after the event, this reserve manifests a desire not to overstate the evidence. We may safely say that it might have been put more strongly and yet have remained within the limits of the truth. But S. Paul writes here, as one conscious of the momentous issues of the subject, with sobriety and self-restraint.

There is, again, a singular parallel between the Apostle's manner and language when writing of the institution of the Eucharist and when writing of the incidents after the Resurrection. Of the former he says, 'I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread. . . .'<sup>1</sup> Of the latter he says, 'I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 23.

our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures . . .'<sup>1</sup> and then follows the list of appearances. So true it is, as Dr. Sanday remarks,<sup>2</sup> that 'in the same precise and deliberate manner in which he had rehearsed the particulars of the Last Supper, S. Paul enumerates one by one the leading appearances of the Lord after the Resurrection.'

Another observation of great importance is that S. Paul places the experiences of the other Apostles and his own experiences, as witnesses to the Resurrection, on the same level of perfect equality. It is obviously his intention to convey the thought that the appearance of Christ to the Twelve, and the appearance of Christ to himself, were identical in kind. The importance of this is very considerable. It is of course possible either to start from the experience of the Twelve, and to urge that, since that experience was objective and external, S. Paul's experience must have been of a similar character; or conversely, to start from the experience of S. Paul, and, asserting its subjective and inward character, to infer that the experience of the Twelve must have been visionary also. Both these inferences have been drawn.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4.

<sup>2</sup> Sanday in Hastings, i. 639; reprinted as *Outlines of the Life of Christ*, pp. 173-4.

But, as we have already seen, the assertion that S. Paul's experience was only an enlightenment within, is exactly the reverse of the Apostle's own conviction about it. His settled and unalterable certainty was that he was the witness of an external fact. Accordingly, when he places the experience of the Apostles on a level with his own, he undoubtedly intends to teach that their experience was, like his own, contact with an external manifestation of Christ's risen glory. Consequently, whether we argue from the experience of the Apostles to that of S. Paul, or conversely, the conclusion reached is in either case the same. The two sets of experience are both objective.

One all-important feature obviously differentiates S. Paul's evidence to the Resurrection from that of the elder Apostles. Theirs is a case of recognition, his of first encounter. They met again, under altered circumstances, that Divine Person Who has already elicited their devotion and impressed Himself upon their characters. He, on the contrary, now for the first time in his life is confronted as a stranger with one hitherto unseen.

Now this is important, because we are sometimes told that the belief of the elder Apostles in our Lord's Resurrection was chiefly due to the impressiveness of His personality. Love and devotion, it is said, impelled them to believe in the glorified condition of One whom they knew to be so morally fair. It seems,

however, certain from the Apostolic writings, that it was the Resurrection alone which enabled them to see His life in its true proportions. Whatever inference a modern mind might think it natural to make from the transcendent greatness of Jesus Christ, it by no means follows that similar inferences must have been drawn in the Apostolic age. And we must take care not to perpetrate anachronisms by reading back ideals and theories which are the product of modern development into an age incapable of understanding them. To the Apostolic age the death of Christ must by itself have crushed and refuted all expectations, and peremptorily have prohibited all possibility of believing in the glorified condition of One whom the stubborn facts of the criminal register presented to the world as condemned and executed.

But in any case, whatever imagination might conceive as possible in the case of the elder Apostles, nothing of the kind could have contributed to belief in the case of S. Paul. With him at least it is not the re-encounter with a personality already deeply imprinted upon him. It seems obvious that he could never have seen our Lord during the earthly ministry. For when he gazes on the form in glory outside Damascus gate, he is completely unable to realise who it is. Only in response to his bewildered inquiry, 'Who art Thou?' comes the answer, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.' There

are no antecedents of love and admiration for moral uniqueness calculated to promote belief in the Resurrection in the case of S. Paul. He has not sat in silent reverence during the days of the Son of Man. Here, at any rate, belief in the Resurrection was independent of all favourable reminiscences.



## CHAPTER VII

### SELF-MANIFESTATION OF THE RISEN LORD RESTRICTED TO THE CIRCLE OF DISCIPLESHIP

It has often been observed that, after His Resurrection, our Lord limited His self-manifestations to the circle of disciples. So far as we know, He appeared exclusively to men who already believed in Him. This seems invariable. No hint is given of appearances to opponents, to Pharisees or Scribes. He is never seen again by the men who crucified Him, or by the magistrates who gave their sentence against Him. Only the friends of the Crucified saw Him after He died. As S. Peter puts it, God showed Him . . . ‘not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us. . . .’<sup>1</sup> Such is the fact, and it is one which awakens criticism. It has been considered that this restriction of the Resurrection-appearances to the circle of believers is doubly strange. For, in the first place, if we had the testimony of opponents, the evidence would be more convincing than it is; while

<sup>1</sup> Acts x. 41.

an evidence limited to a special area is less secure. And in the next place, men have thought it impossible to reconcile with fairness this refusal to appear to the blind, ignorant multitude, who badly stood in need of such enlightenment. These are substantially the two forms which the objection has taken. Our Lord, it is asserted, ought to have appeared to His opponents, both for our sake and for theirs : for our sake considered evidentially, and for their sake considered spiritually. Let us dwell on both these difficulties.

## I

First, then, regarded from an evidential point of view, it is said that the case for the Resurrection would be much stronger than it is, if Jesus Christ had manifested His risen glory to the men who crucified Him.

Suppose, then, that He had done as the objection demands. Now, of course it is impossible for any human being to ascertain the result of an event which has never happened. We may analyse the outcome of a historic incident, but we can never determine, with any approach to certainty, what might have issued from something which did not occur. It is proverbial that the student of history, of religious history in particular, must be prepared for surprises ; and we are accustomed to say that it is the unexpected

which happens. History refuses to be determined by our anticipations, and again and again the very results which ought to have occurred are precisely those which did not happen. Clever men have often exercised their talents in describing history as it ought to have been ; but the universal experience is that our calculations somehow fail to do justice to the complex elements of the problem, or that the unruly wills and affections of men are too volatile and capricious to submit to our logic and obey our expectations.

Accordingly, it is fair to say that, if the risen Christ had appeared to His opponents, it is impossible for us to determine with certainty what would have been the result of such an appearing. It is conceivable that not one solitary person among them would have been thereby converted into a true disciple. This alternative is undoubtedly improbable in the extreme. But our purpose is to consider all possible cases, in order to weigh their evidential value. Suppose, then, that the opponents of Christ had seen Him after He was risen, and that none of their number had been converted by the sight. What would criticism infer but this, namely, that the moment the apparition passed beyond the charmed circle of affection and belief, it was absolutely powerless to produce conviction or to awaken sympathy? Conclusive evidence this, it would be said, of the emotional and subjective character of the whole transaction : the

opponents of Jesus saw Him after He was risen ; they did not thereupon believe in Him, and how can we ? Thus the failure of the manifestation, although no proof whatever of its unreality, would assuredly be urged as an argument for unbelief. In case of failure, then, the appearance of Christ to His opponents, so far from strengthening the evidence, would have positively weakened it.

But take the opposite alternative. Suppose that the manifestation of the risen Christ to His opponents had convinced them all ; that in a body, without exception, they passed instantaneously into the precincts of belief. What would be the evidential value of this to modern thought ? It would be open to the critic to say, This wholesale conversion of a city-full is in itself a suspicious thing. Obviously a wave of emotion and impulse swept like a torrent across the passionate Oriental throng ; a sudden reaction, caused by the demeanour of the Crucified and the wondrous dignity with which He met His death, converted them in a day from the extreme of opposition to the extreme of unreserved adherence. It has great psychological importance, but no historic worth. It would be open to the critic to say this thing, and it would possess at least a certain plausibility.

Suppose, on the contrary, that neither of these alternative effects had been produced, and that the manifestation had divided the multitudes in twain, that

some believed and some were doubtful. Then criticism might employ the fact of doubt to negative the fact of belief. Is not this precisely what has happened as it is? Have not the words 'but some doubted' been quoted constantly as a ground for challenging the Apostles' certainty?

Whatever effect, then, a manifestation of the risen Christ to His opponents might have produced, it could not have given a demonstration, an evidential force, beyond the power of criticism to challenge. The same difficulties to faith must still have remained.

After all, evidentially considered, the best witnesses of the Resurrection are obviously the men competent to testify to the identity of the Christ who rises with the Christ who was crucified. And certainly the most qualified for this duty are not strangers, but friends. The great majority of the residents in Jerusalem would not have more than a superficial acquaintance with our Lord. Their evidence for His identity would not come to much. Some knew Him, of course, fairly well. Pilate could never forget: that interview must have been written indelibly on the tablets of his memory. Yet, after all, he had probably only seen our Lord one hour in his life. Would Pilate be a very convincing evidence of the Resurrection? Whatever the answer given, at least the most qualified witnesses were precisely the men we have. It all returns in the long run to Peter and to John.

## II

The second ground on which men desiderate a manifestation of the risen Christ to his opponents is for the spiritual advantage of these men who crucified Him.

But, after all, the opponents of Christ were only placed thereby on a level with the rest of mankind, to whom the risen Lord has made no visible demonstration of His glory. To ask, Why did not Christ appear to the blind multitude of his opponents? is to single out one instance of a larger principle. We may just as reasonably ask Why did not Christ appear in the streets of Rome? as ask Why did He not appear to the Roman Governor in Jerusalem? There were, after all, blind multitudes in Rome as well as in the Syrian city. And the capital of the world had stronger claims than a distant province on the attention of one who would convince mankind. Moreover, why limit the objection to one generation or one age? Why does not the risen Christ appear in modern London? There are blind multitudes enough among us still, needing enlightenment quite as badly as the original opponents of Christ. Nay more, it is the old objection over again: Why does not God write His revelation across the skies in such a way that the world must be convinced? Now, what-

ever the explanation may be, what is obvious is this: that God does not work in that way. If the manifestation of the risen Christ was restricted, it is in exact analogy with the whole providential dealing of God with mankind. Any objection, therefore, against it is virtually an objection against the principle of the divine government of the world. It is an objection, therefore, which is natural from an Agnostic, but not from the lips of a Unitarian or Theist of any kind.

But further. Study the whole method of Jesus Christ with men, and we shall see that He never employs miraculous power as a coercive instrument in conversion.

Our Lord 'by no means saw in the external miraculous mode of working as such, the characteristic means of accomplishing His Messianic task. He rather recognised the danger of men being drawn away, in their astonishment at the external miraculous nature of His works, from a regard for their religious foundation and significance, and of men's failing to strive to obtain from Him the true salvation of the Kingdom of God in their striving after a miraculous obtaining of external benefits from Him. . . . Therefore He desired that such acts of helpfulness by word and hand, which He Himself deemed miraculous, should not be publicly known.'<sup>1</sup> They

<sup>1</sup> S. Mark i. 44, v. 37, vii. 33, viii. 23; Matt. ix. 30.



should only be known, so far as they were miraculous, to those who, on the ground of their trustful reception of His message of the Kingdom of God, could also gain a right judgment of the miraculous divine manifestations of grace and power in His Kingdom. And so to the Pharisees who wished to make their recognition of His divine mission dependent upon their being shown by Him a sensible sign from heaven, He flatly denied the fulfilment of their desire.' <sup>1</sup>

When the suggestion was made that He should cast Himself down from the Temple rock and alight upon the ground beneath unhurt in the midst of the astonished multitude, thereby conclusively demonstrating His possession of supernatural power, He repudiated the suggestion as a temptation of the Evil One. He will not exercise His power to such an end. Nothing but an evil personality could suggest to Him this oppressive, coercive use of power, reckless of the moral state of the mass before whose unregenerate gaze it would be wrought. Nothing but ignorance of His awful mission and true character could thus invite Him to degrade Himself to the level of a common magician and wonder-worker. He will not, He cannot, do this thing. And throughout His ministry it is always the same. He works His miracles, but first He draws the sufferer away from the crowd, or He refuses to permit

<sup>1</sup> Wendt, *Teaching of Jesus*, ii. p. 194.

the evil spirits to make Him known, or He enjoins silence on the recipient of His mercies, or He departs abruptly to another place. He is reticent, reserved, mysterious in His use of miraculous power. He exercises it, because love necessitates its use; He exercises it in obscurity as far as may be, because He fears its possible abuse. His life is one long struggle between the conflicting interests of the bodily needs to which He must minister, and of the spiritual state which may be hurt and crippled by the very use of these miraculous remedies. There is one perpetual endeavour of the world to induce Him to parade His power, steadily met by an unvarying refusal to accede to their wishes. When the Pharisees approach and demand a sign from heaven, something really convincing, a miracle which shall remove all possibility of doubt, 'He sighed deeply in His spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? Verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation. And He left them, and, entering into the ship again, departed to the other side.'<sup>1</sup> Why that sigh? Why that refusal? It is due to recognition of the moral uselessness of external evidence to minds unfit for its reception. They know not what they ask. To grant this petition would be injurious to their own true interests. They have already seen enough, and more than

<sup>1</sup> S. Mark viii. 11-13.

enough, to be productive of discipleship, if the character were ready for that solemn step. But it is not ready. If He gave a mysterious allusion to the sign of the prophet Jonah, it involved no less a refusal of their desire. He knew the condition of their hearts. There was nothing for it, but that He should enter the ship again and depart to the other side. Precisely the same principles governed Him in the final challenge on the Cross. Let Him only come down and demonstrate His claims, and they will accept Him as the Christ. So for the last time they tempt Him to use His miraculous powers in accordance with their ideals. And His silent refusal is in harmony with His lifelong method, and no less impressive than His open repudiation.

Now what does all this mean, this striking reserve in the use of miraculous power, this caution, as of a physician who holds a remedy capable of dealing death if misused, and liable to misuse through human ignorance or perversity? It means first of all that miraculous power may be employed to confirm an already existing faith, but never to coerce the reluctant will. Once only does Christ definitely summarise the evidence of His miracles and appeal to them as a ground of faith in Him: 'Go and show John again the things which ye do hear and see. The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up,

and the poor have the Gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me.'<sup>1</sup> But this very exception to the general rule is in perfect keeping with His ordinary reserve. For to whom is that message given? To a man of peculiar advancement in moral and spiritual intensity. To the most profound, serious-minded, earnest, devoted of men. The evidence of the miracle may confirm his faith; it cannot injure his moral condition.

But to make this appeal to one of the morally noblest of men is one thing: to employ miraculous power in an overwhelming coercive way, crushing down resistance, and indeed reason and will, before it, is another. And this latter is morally worthless. If, then, our Lord refused to employ His Resurrection as a means of coercing His opponents into faith, He did but act in perfect keeping with the principle by which His whole exercise of supernatural power had been governed.

Indeed, this refusal of Christ to employ His Resurrection as an instrument to overwhelm unbelief is not the least among the illustrations of His sublimity. Imagine for a moment a Christ reappearing in the streets of Jerusalem after His Resurrection, addressing the crowds, being arrested by the authorities again, and brought once again before the assembled

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. xi. 4 *seq.*

Sanhedrin, and then suddenly vanishing out of their midst. Consider the moral effect of such proceedings. Contrast this reduction of the awful narrative to these vulgar levels, and we feel instinctively that if He did not perform what criticism would suggest, it is because human improvements on His methods are infinitely beneath the course which He actually pursued. The Christ of the Evangelists is what He is precisely because He did not adopt the inferior methods by which men would advise Him to win the world.

But not only would a manifestation of Himself to His opponents when risen have contradicted our Lord's whole use of miraculous power; there is a peculiar reason for His reserve in the very nature of the Resurrection. For the Resurrection was not a return to life under its former conditions; it was an entrance into a purely spiritual state.

And all the New Testament evidence shows that for men to enter into effective contact with the spiritual world requires special receptivity. To take ordinary men of the world, such as Pontius Pilate, Caiaphas, or Herod, and confront them with a glorified personality from the regions of everlasting light, would not only bring them into associations which they must be incompetent to understand, perhaps even to realise in the least; it would do them a positive injury. It is not without significance

that the disciples themselves experienced difficulty in recognition when they saw the risen Lord. If even of the Galilæan disciples it had to be recorded that 'some doubted,' we may well infer the difficulties which would press upon the bewildered mind of one totally unprepared by spiritual affinity and personal faith. The different effects of a supernatural manifestation upon Saul of Tarsus and upon his traveling companions is another illustration of the truth that the value of such visions must vary with receptiveness. Unless, therefore, the opponents of Christ had greatly changed, it is clear that no such manifestation could have been to their spiritual advantage. Is it possible that, if Christ had appeared to Pilate or Herod, it would have been beyond their power to apprehend the significance of the fact? Remember that our Lord veiled His identity on the way to Emmaus in order that the minds of the two disciples should calmly reflect and realise what Scripture taught, undisturbed by the overwhelming fact of His Resurrection. Remember that He sent messages through angels even to His disciples before He appeared in the centre of the Twelve. Why these precautions? Do they not suggest that to receive the risen Lord was very difficult even for trained and disciplined human nature? Remember that there is 'an ascending scale in the appearances'; they occur first to indi-



viduals—to S. Mary Magdalene, to S. Peter by himself, to the two on the way to Emmaus, and not until after these to the collected Apostles, the Ten, and the Eleven, and ultimately to the five hundred brethren at once. Thus one manifestation prepared the way for another. S. Peter must have been present at three or four. Thus the disciples themselves seem to need a training before they can endure with real gain the grandeur of such a contemplation.<sup>1</sup> How much more would this be so with a pagan magistrate, a dissolute prince, an unscrupulous president of the council! The truth is that a vision of the risen Christ must be very awful; perhaps more than ordinary beings can profitably bear in their ordinary state. It would not be in the least surprising to be told that the appearance of Jesus as a poor prisoner before Pontius Pilate, and that interview described for us by S. John, was morally and spiritually much more calculated to do the pagan real good than if Christ had come again to him from the other world after the Resurrection. As Rothe says: ‘If the Lord Jesus were once more to appear amongst us in the flesh, but quite *incognito*, without title or honour, this would be the surest method of discovering who are His. He who *then* felt the strongest attraction to Him, who bent before Him in deepest reverence,

<sup>1</sup> See Sanday, *Outlines of the Life of Christ*, p. 182.



would belong to Him most closely, and would have the truest faith in Him.'<sup>1</sup>

Moral affinities with the Son of God in His *incognito* would declare themselves, and did declare themselves, in the days of His ministry. Moral antipathies also were made plain. But the manifestation of His risen glory might easily overwhelm, rather than advance, the character subjected to such experience. And that experience, glorious as it is, was only beneficial to the disciples because of their spiritual state. Otherwise it is readily intelligible that it may be far better for the generality of us that we should not have seen.<sup>2</sup> It may be far more conducive to moral and religious growth that the few, strong, trained ones should bear the splendours of the interview, of which we are not capable, and that we should hear from their lips the announcement of what they alone have seen. Once more, this is the ordinary providential dealing with mankind. God reveals directly to the few, and indirectly through them to the many, realities both in the world of nature and in the world of grace. Unless, therefore, we challenge all His methods, there is no ground to resent the fact that the Resurrection was revealed, 'not unto all the people,' but only 'unto witnesses chosen before of God.'

<sup>1</sup> *Still Hours*, p. 224.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Tempus dandi recipientis est aptitudo*: fr. Origen on Psalm i.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE NATURE OF THE RESURRECTION BODY

RECENT criticism has observed, what indeed no careful reader of the Gospels can fail to notice, that the Evangelistic statements on the nature of our Lord's resurrection body are of two very different kinds. Some of their assertions exhibit a materialistic tendency, others are of a spiritualist description. The Evangelists do not separate or distinguish these two kinds. They pass in rapid transition from one class to the other. But the distinction is indisputable and perplexing.

1. First there is the class of statements which exhibit a materialistic view. The grave in the garden is described as vacant; the Body as literally risen. The Body which rose is evidently identified with that which was buried; and the marks of the wounds are said to have been still visible upon it. The disciples know His voice. They know His features to be the same as of old. He stands among them on solid earth, Himself in state of

evident solidity. He is no shadow that can be passed through, but firm as any other human frame. He appeals in the most materialistic way to the evidences of sight and touch: 'Handle Me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have.'<sup>1</sup> He even consumes food before them. He also accompanies them along the street through the city to the Mount of Olives. All these statements of the Evangelists represent the risen Body of Christ as if it were in the same condition as before it died.

2. But it is noted that we have another series of statements of a completely different character. For instance, it is obviously implied in the narrative that He dwells with them no more as He used to do in the days of His ministry; but somewhere, none knows where, apart in an unseen world. They never know when or where to find Him, or how long He will stay. Nor is it possible to detain Him as it was in former days. His coming and His going are alike unexpected; and His entrance is as mysterious and inexplicable as His manner of vanishing out of sight. And when He appears among them His appearance is sometimes greatly changed. His intimate companions can fail to recognise. They may have their unformulated misgivings, and take their time before misgiving is exchanged for

<sup>1</sup> S. Luke xxiv. 43.

certainly. He comes in different forms at different times. It is possible to walk some distance on a country road, to listen to an entire conversation, and yet not until the last moment to realise who He is. Viewed in this series of statements the change is wonderful. He seems to do nothing like an ordinary human being. 'What was natural to Him before seems now miraculous; what was before miraculous is now natural.'

These statements are certainly of a widely different nature. They are, it is urged, the outcome of a spiritualistic theory of the risen Body of Christ.

3. Here, then, it is said, is a contradiction. Two theories appear in conflict; and by no ingenuity can the two be reconciled. There is, says one, a 'capricious alternating between a subtle and a gross corporeity . . . which is self-contradictory.'<sup>1</sup> Another well expresses the difficulties encountered by the imagination when it realises to itself the details of the tradition: 'A body crucified and buried which retains its material constituents, and yet which operates in a way inconsistent with such retention, vanishing, reappearing, penetrating solid obstacles, things which matter cannot do; such a body is a fact which the imagination cannot image, because it is self-contradictory: it is neither of one world nor

<sup>1</sup> Keim, vi. 340.

the other, neither matter nor spirit, but a dream-like confusion of the two.'<sup>1</sup>

Criticism does not only indicate the difficulty. It has also proposed a solution. And the solution, which is foreign in origin but reproduced in England, amounts to the advice that we should accept the spiritual series of statements and reject the materialistic series. This latter, it is asserted—of course without the least pretension to documentary proof—is interpolated in narratives of the earlier age, and must accordingly be cancelled if we would arrive at the original Apostolic convictions.

## II

Before proceeding to what is we believe the true explanation, it is essential to consider the teaching of S. Paul on the resurrection body of Christians in 1 Corinthians xv.

To explain the relation between the body which dies and the body which rises, S. Paul adopts the simile of the seed and the plant which springs from it. Now this illustration is obviously intended to provide the key to S. Paul's theory. The difficulty with parables and illustrations is that they are more or less inadequate. Their value lies in the special point for which they are adduced; but

<sup>1</sup> Skrine, *Contemporary Review*, December 1904, p. 860.

they become positively misleading when pressed beyond that point, or in details which are but accessories, and no part of the main intention. We all know how the exposition of the Parables of our Lord has suffered from forgetfulness of the necessary limits of an illustration. But the main ideas suggested by S. Paul's simile of the seed and the plant are unmistakable. The relation of seed to plant is manifestly one of identity yet of change: identity because the seed is the germ and the potentiality of the perfected plant; yet change so great as to make identity almost unrecognisable unless we knew that the one was the product of the other. On the one hand, without the seed you cannot have the plant; it is a relation of identity: on the other, it may be said, 'thou sowest not that body that shall be'; it is a relation of difference. In a sense you do sow the body that shall be; in a sense you do not. It is expressed by paradox. The simile of course has its obvious limitations. For example, the seed and the plant are both alike material; the difference is in form rather than in substance. But it cannot be thence inferred that the same would hold of the subject to which S. Paul applies this illustration. For to do that would be to contradict his later teachings. The use of the simile is restricted to the two main ideas of identity and difference.

Now for the application of the simile. According to S. Paul, the relation between the pre-resurrection and post-resurrection state of the human body is one of identity yet difference.

1. Undoubtedly S. Paul dwells more on the difference than he does on the identity. The four antitheses of 1 Corinthians xv. insist most impressively on difference. They culminate in the phrases which respectively describe the present as a natural body, and the future as a spiritual body; 'It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.' The term natural, in the original the psychical, body denotes that which has the animal soul as its vital principle.<sup>1</sup> It denotes the body which is the organ and instrument of the animal force rather than of the spiritual personality, which indeed in many ways it restricts and confines. The natural body is that which discharges the functions of animal self-maintenance and reproduction. It is that which eats, sleeps, breathes, assimilates material substance, and is corruptible. It is, in brief, the body which is adapted to life under material conditions. The spiritual body, on the contrary, in the original the pneumatical body, is the body whose vital principle is the spiritual personality. It is therefore the antithesis to the natural, or animal, or psychical frame. It is a body adapted to life under

<sup>1</sup> Meyer, *Heinrici*, on 1 Cor. xv.



spiritual conditions. It is the best self-expression of spirit; the organ and instrument most appropriate to the inner self.

Certainly S. Paul has emphasised the aspect of difference between the body as it is and as it is to be. And he returns to the thought again when he adds with energy, 'Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.' The old fleshly body cannot be transferred into spiritual existence for which it would be intrinsically unsuited. Flesh, in the contemporary thought, signified the material substance, blood the vital force of the animal frame. And these, S. Paul asserts, cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Flesh and blood in the passage before us must be understood in the literal sense. To interpret them as a reference to evil behaviour would be to introduce a train of thought quite foreign to the subject with which the Apostle is dealing. Thus it is certainly true that S. Paul lays the greatest stress on the dissimilarity between the two conditions of the body.

2. But at the same time it is not true to say that S. Paul ignores the aspect of identity. Identity is involved, as we have seen, in his simile of the seed and the plant. S. Paul does not describe a body completely new, having no relation whatever to the old. That would involve him in contradiction with his own selected illustration. There is

identity between plant and seed. Moreover, it is certain that the Apostle's entire teaching on the resurrection body of Christians is founded on his conception of the resurrection Body of Christ. And S. Paul, says Pfleiderer, conceived of the resurrection Body of Christ 'not as an entirely new one, having no relation to the old (which would then have remained in the grave) but as identical at least in form if not also in its material with the Body which was put to death, inasmuch as it came into being from that Body by being reanimated and at the same time changed; for on no other supposition could such terms as "resurrection" and "rising from the dead" have been appropriately used.'<sup>1</sup> Attention has been rightly called to the emphatic manner in which, when describing the experience of Christ's Body, S. Paul writes—dead—buried—rose—in succession, which can mean nothing else than the resuscitation, under whatever altered conditions, of that which died and was buried. The aspect of difference between the body in its present and its future state is only half the Pauline teaching, and to place exclusive stress upon it is not Apostolic. The aspect of difference must be balanced with the aspect of identity, if we would retain the proportions of the Apostolic view. Without this aspect we can only present a half-truth, which the Apostle himself would surely not have accepted;

<sup>1</sup> *Paulinism*, i. 260.

a half-truth indeed of an extremely dangerous kind.

### III

Now, if we compare the teaching of S. Paul with that of the Evangelists, it is so obvious that he agrees with the spiritualist rather than with the materialist series in their description of the nature of our Lord's resurrection state, that recent criticism has inquired whether it is conceivable that the advocate of so purely spiritual a view could possibly have endorsed the materialistic narrative in S. Luke. In face of the passage where S. Luke places on the risen Master's lips the startling phrases, 'Handle Me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have,' is it possible, asks the critic, that the author of 1 Corinthians xv. believed all this? Did he not expressly say that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God? Do you not see, it is urged, that when S. Luke put that intensely material language on the lips of Christ he was manifestly repudiating all connection with the spiritualist school? Do you not see that when S. Paul wrote, 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,' he was advocating a theory irreconcilable with materialistic ideas? Accordingly, we are informed that not only must we select between the alternative opinions, but that S. Paul himself has already done this for us, and

that our wisdom consists in accepting his interpretation and in ignoring the other.

But this objection is far more plausible than profound. It is really based on an extremely superficial view of Christian truth and human evidential necessities. To appreciate the reconciliation of S. Paul with the Evangelists we must dwell more carefully on the nature of the resurrection body. The question is, What is the body? The body has been defined as an expression of personality. It is an organ for self-manifestation. 'A human body,' says Moberly, 'is the necessary—it is the only method and condition on earth, of spiritual personality. It is capable indeed of expressing spirit very badly; it is capable of belying it; indeed it is hardly capable of expressing it quite perfectly; it is, in fact, almost always falling short of at least the ideal expression of it. And yet body is the only method of spiritual life; even as things are, spirit is the true meaning of bodily life; and bodies are really vehicles and expressions of spirit; whilst the perfect ideal would certainly be, not spirit without body, but body which was the ideally perfect utterance of spirit.'<sup>1</sup>

Now it is clear that the instrument for self-expression must vary according to the environment of that expression. We may be, we are, constantly surrounded by personalities, of whose presence we

<sup>1</sup> Moberly, *Problems and Principles*, p. 358.

are completely unconscious, because the organ of their self-manifestation is one adapted to spiritual conditions and therefore unadapted to material ones. And this leads us at once to say that the resurrection body of Christ may be viewed in two ways ; first, in its own intrinsic nature as it is in its normal condition ; and secondly, in that state which it may adopt for purposes of self-manifestation. First, that is, in relation to a spiritual environment ; secondly, in relation to our material world.

1. First then, considering the resurrection body of Christ as it is in itself, as related to a spiritual environment : it is this which S. Paul had in mind when he wrote concerning the spiritual body. The spiritual body is, as we have already seen, a body adapted to life under spiritual conditions ; it is the best self-expression of spirit, or to use Dr. Moberly's words, ' the ideally perfect utterance of spirit.' Future existence according to S. Paul is not mere spirit, nor spirit without body, but spirit embodied in the most perfect way.

Of course we know nothing about it except what Scripture tells, and we must take the greatest care not to substitute imagination for what is revealed. But it would seem consistent with the conception of a spiritual body, a body appropriate for life in a spiritual environment, to say that it would be imperceptible to the human senses as we possess

them. A spiritual body would be a body which could be neither handled nor touched nor even seen. Its presence, its existence, would be unascertainable by any material organs or instruments. Such, then, was and is the resurrection Body of Christ in its natural state. It dwelt apart, not on earth. It stood naturally in no relationship with life under its present conditions. All the spiritualistic series of details contained in the Evangelists belong to the normal resurrection state. He cannot be found or seen. No man can ascertain His dwelling-place. He is not hindered by material obstructions. Men cannot intercept his movements. The better adapted a body is, as an instrument of life under material conditions, the less it would be adapted for life under spiritual surroundings. Solid flesh and bones are necessities for earthly existence and admirably adapted to their situation ; but solid flesh and bones would effectually prevent adaptability to spiritual conditions.

2. But, on the other side, the evidence states that this risen body was actually seen and touched and handled. Yes : doubtless it actually was. But not in its normal condition. If we say that our Lord being normally intangible, inaudible, invisible, existing in a purely spiritual state, did nevertheless assume materiality, and make Himself tangible, audible, visible, for evidential and instructive purposes, and so temporarily bring Himself within range of our material



organisations, we have an explanation which does justice to all the facts, leaves the narrative intact, and removes the contradiction. If visibility and tangibility were parts of the assumed condition, the supposed discrepancies are surely reconciled. For purposes of self-manifestation to those living under material conditions, our Lord Himself temporarily reassumed material conditions.

Does this seem theatrical? Does it appear to give an air of unreality? But every manifestation of the spiritual to our earthly senses must be through the medium of an outward form. The Angels of Bethlehem were not naturally audible and visible to human ears and eyes. They must adopt for the time an instrument fitted to be the means of communication in material surroundings. There is no other way in which the spiritual can appear in the material except through assumption of material conditions.

3. Now, if we hold this distinction between the risen body in its normal state, and the risen body in its temporary reappearance under material conditions, all the asserted contradictions between S. Paul and the Evangelists disappear. The simple-minded men of Galilee are simply stating the facts on the side of history. They are placing on record the economical manifestations of the risen Master in the visible and tangible form assumed by Him for evidential purposes; while S. Paul, the man of abstract conceptions



and profundity of thought, is going behind those visible manifestations to analyse the nature of the resurrection body as it is in itself, in its own real and normal state. Accordingly, there does not appear the slightest reason whatever why S. Paul should not have believed the 'materialistic' statements in S. Luke, and at the same time have maintained his spiritual theory of the risen body's real value. For there is no logical inconsistency between them if understood as already suggested; the one as a description of the normal state, the other of an occasional adaptation to peculiar circumstances.

To speak of the resurrection body as purely spiritual without any hint whatever of materiality is not in the least necessarily to deny that Christ appeared under material conditions. A man may surely say with perfect consistency: Personally I find no difficulty in accepting both. I believe with S. Luke that Christ did actually appear under tangible conditions. I believe with S. Paul that behind those transitory appearances the Master's resurrection Body existed in a far more wonderful state as the perfect self-expression of spirit. Normally He stood in no relation to human senses; occasionally for important reasons He lowered Himself into such relationships. Where is the contradiction?

It seems, then, that the apparent incongruities are due, not to contradictory principles in the docu-

ments, but to the diversity of aspect and purpose of the great Apostle's teaching. Here, as habitually, S. Paul only delights in historic fact for the sake of its fundamental meaning. S. Paul is not in the least attacking an Evangelist or demolishing some Galilæan theory of the manifestations on Easter Day. Rather he is concerned with the far-withdrawn and permanent realities behind those manifestations.

#### IV

These considerations naturally lead us on to a further point of very great importance and difficulty. Can we ascertain more closely what is the connection between the body which dies and the body which rises? Is the connection of such a kind that the evolution of the spiritual body involves the disappearance of the material frame? or can they co-exist? S. Paul's teaching on the spiritual body has been understood to imply that the connection between the two is, if not problematical, at least not intimate. If that which is sown is natural, and that which rises spiritual, are they not really independent of each other? If the relation is in strict analogy with that between the seed and the perfected plant, the product being of such a kind that any connection at all is practically unrecognisable apart from special information, does it not follow that the one may

remain intact within the grave while the other is declared to have risen? And if this be applied to the resurrection of Christ, is it necessary to believe that the grave was really empty, that the Body which died saw no corruption and literally disappeared by being absorbed into the Body which rose? Are these particulars, the emptiness of the grave in Joseph's garden, and the actual physical resuscitation of the buried corpse, essential to Christian belief in the resurrection of our Lord from the dead? Such are the inquiries of the day.

Now in reply to these inquiries it is well to guard ourselves from error by a preliminary reminder of our ignorance. We do not really know at all the precise relation between the natural and the spiritual body. S. Paul, it is true, indicates rather the nature of the risen body than its relationship to the corpse. But at the same time he makes it plain that there is a real, if mysterious connection. He does not describe the process by which the one originates in the other, but he certainly does state that this is the actual fact. The body which is, is the germ of the body which shall be. But we do not know precisely what it is in which the identity consists.

1. If we consider the relationship between the present and the future body in the case of Christians in general, it is commonly assumed in modern apologetic writings that in their case resurrection does not neces-

sitate the reassembling of the disintegrated atoms of the corpse, nor their entire conversion into the substance of the spiritual body. And indeed this independence of the resurrection body of all identity with the material particles of the body which died has been constantly offered as solving the problems of physical resurrection. The burning of the bodies of the Martyrs, the scattering of their ashes on the rivers—processes of assimilation whereby the flesh of one being may become a constituent element in the body of another—have not in the least affected the belief in resurrection; it being understood that while the earthly body and the risen body are strictly related as germ to product, yet the relationship is one consistent with the greatest independence.

Of course, if this theory of the relationship between the natural and the spiritual body be correct, it would seem to follow as a necessary inference that they might conceivably coexist. If the relation is that of germ to product, it will be open to question whether the complete disappearance of the germ is necessary to the existence of the product; in other words, whether the body might still continue, so far as human capacities could ascertain, identical in the grave and yet the resurrection have actually taken place. This is what is being commonly said to-day.

2. But even if these assertions so generally made

be correct, still surely we are bound to draw a very clear distinction between the resurrection of Christians and the resurrection of Christ. It by no means follows that what holds good in their case holds good in every detail also in His. If it be true that the relations between the natural and the spiritual body are of such a kind that the latter and the former can coexist, yet it does not follow in the very least that this holds good in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And for this obvious reason : when Christians assume their resurrection state they will not have to reappear within a material environment. They will not have to convince a race living under the conditions of earthly sense that they have actually risen from the dead. There will be no evidential claims upon them. They will live exclusively under spiritual conditions. Accordingly there will be no necessity to show that their graves are empty, nor that the natural body has disappeared, nor that it has been completely absorbed into the substance of their resurrection state. But in the case of Jesus Christ the requirements were wholly different. There could not be for Him a mere assumption of spiritual conditions ; for there was the faith of the human race to be considered. There were evidential necessities. There was the supreme necessity of convincing reluctant, bewildered men that He had literally risen from the dead. Now

it is absolutely inconceivable that the disciples could ever have credited His resurrection if His natural Body had been found still lying in the grave. Even if it be theoretically correct that the coexistence of His natural and His spiritual Body is conceivable, yet it is certain that the contemporaries of Christ could never have believed it; and it may be open to question whether the generality of mankind could believe it now.<sup>1</sup> If men on approaching the grave had found that the body which died still lay there dead, the evidence of the senses would have crushed all theory and made belief wellnigh impossible. In face of the overwhelming fact of a corrupting corpse, no theoretical separability between the natural and spiritual body, even if such a suggestion at that stage in mental development had been possible, would have saved the simple men of Galilee from being confirmed in the certainty that He had not risen. The whole drift of the Apostolic conviction is shown in the words ‘He . . . saw no corruption.’

And probably the same holds true of the generality among us now. If individuals here and there believe it possible to hold the faith in Christ’s Resurrection independently of the question whether the Body born of Mary corrupted in the grave, we can well imagine the difference which it would make to mankind if the evidence of the Evangelists had not included the state-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Skrine, *Contemporary Review*, December 1904.



ment of the empty grave, and the actual resumption of the buried form.

Hence it has been most truly and beautifully said that the incident of the empty grave is a sign. 'This incident is, like all the rest of the story both before the Resurrection and after it, like the taking of the Body in the embodiment of the Nativity, as well as the taking it again in the re-embodiment of the Forty Days—a sign. It is a part of the outward and visible sign in the whole Sacrament of reconciliation.'<sup>1</sup>

## V

It is necessary for us, as members of a portion of the Church which has expressed itself in unmistakable clearness on the subject of the resurrection body of Christ, to ask a further question. Is this theory which regards His resurrection body as constitutionally out of all ordinary relation to our earthly senses, but capable by divine power of introduction into their sphere, compatible with the teaching of the English Church? The English Church defines that 'Christ . . . took again His body, with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature; wherewith He ascended into Heaven.'<sup>2</sup>

The criticism prevalent about this statement to-day

<sup>1</sup> Skrine, *Contemporary Review*, December 1904.

<sup>2</sup> Article iv.



is that it is intensely materialistic. Would it not be more accurate to say that it is derived from the Evangelists rather than from S. Paul?—*i.e.* it is concerned with our Lord's historic manifestations of identity rather than with the profounder metaphysical and theological inquiry, What constitutes the nature of the risen body? In regard to the historic manifestations of the risen Lord under material conditions, the Article, if popular in form, is substantially correct. But it leaves scope for the further inquiry, What lay behind those natural manifestations? It must be supplemented, therefore, by the further teaching of S. Paul.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE ASCENSION

THE narrative of the Ascension is particularly repugnant to the critical temper of the age. It has been characterised as a legend belonging to the childhood of the race, a period which we are asserted long since to have left behind. No doubt, so we are informed, it was a temporary vehicle for the conveying of the truth, but we are asked whether we cannot dissociate the symbol from the idea; whether it is not easy and beneficial to hold the conception of the exaltation of Jesus Christ to glory without entangling that conception any longer in oriental symbols of a miraculous kind, which, if helpful once, are rather the reverse to-day, and indeed hinder the acceptance of the idea they were intended to present.

#### I

We will begin our discussion with an account of the Scripture teaching on the Ascension of Christ.

1. And first with the Four Gospels.

In the Gospels we are confronted with the fact

that no record of the Ascension is given either in S. Matthew or in S. John.

The omission of the Ascension is certainly not what we should expect, but we must beware of overvaluing our expectations. It has, indeed, been objected that, if the life of your friend had terminated in a visible ascension through the clouds, you would hardly fail to record it in writing his biography. But it must be remembered that the modern conception of a biographer's functions was certainly not that which controlled the Four Evangelists.<sup>1</sup> The Gospel of S. John, for instance, is connected with the incidents of some thirty days out of thirty-three years. It begins without any reference to the Saviour's birth. It omits the life altogether until it reaches thirty years of age. Clearly, whatever principles governed this procedure, they are not the principles which a modern biographer sets before him. And yet, self-evident as this is, it is perpetually forgotten. Criticism, finding itself confronted with the omission of an incident contrary to its expectations, constantly takes refuge in the ambiguous remark that early tradition knew nothing about it. But to take silence as equivalent to ignorance is neither critical nor just. It is impossible seriously to maintain the assumption that a teacher's

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Sanday, *The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 71: 'The author was writing a gospel, not a biography in the modern sense of the word'; and p. 206.

utterances are co-extensive with his information. And such treatment of a record, merely because its contents or omissions are contrary to expectation, has been justly rebuked by a critic himself widely remote from the Catholic position. 'The critics,' says Jülicher,<sup>1</sup> 'often set up the standard of their own logic . . . in short, a gospel such as they themselves would write it, as their guide.'

The Gospel of S. John, like S. Matthew's, omits the incident of the Ascension, yet certainly appears to imply what it does not describe. Just as the Bread of Life is explained while the institution of the Eucharist is omitted, so the Ascension is foretold yet not described. For it is to S. John that we owe the words of Christ, 'What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?'<sup>2</sup>—words which certainly seem to imply a prediction that such ascension would be one day visibly witnessed by them.<sup>3</sup>

It is to S. John also that we owe the remarkable fact that the risen Lord directed the disciples to His Ascension rather than to the Resurrection itself. 'Go to My brethren, and say unto them I ascend. . . .'

The omission of the incident of the Ascension in the Fourth Gospel is significant. The later the date, the less possible to ascribe that omission to ignorance

<sup>1</sup> Jülicher, *Introduction to New Testament*.

<sup>2</sup> S. John vi. 62.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. 'passage où il est évidemment question d'un fait extérieur, visible.'—Lichtenberger, *Encyclopédie*. s.v. Asc.

of the fact. No man doubts that towards the close of the century the physical Ascension was the accepted belief. And yet just where, on the rationalist theory, a belief in Christ's exaltation which found concrete and material expression in the Ascension ought to have reached its most elaborate and complete amplitude, it is omitted from the Gospel narrative altogether. That is at least a significant instance of Evangelistic sobriety and self-restraint.

But if the Ascension is omitted by S. Matthew and S. John, it is mentioned in the present conclusion to S. Mark. The reference is, however, involved in the uncertainties attached to that conclusion. If we accept the estimate given by Dr. Swete, in what Nestle calls 'the most careful discussion of the passage,'<sup>1</sup> that the present Appendix to S. Mark is 'a genuine relic of the first generation,'<sup>2</sup> we shall be justified in saying that the Ascension was recognised in the early Apostolic tradition. The fact remains that the Ascension stands recorded in the accepted conclusion to S. Mark. And this fact is of the highest worth. For we may say, without hesitation, that no incident could have secured universal acceptance in the early Church as a conclusion to one of the Four Gospels unless it had agreed with the Church's mind. That this conclusion achieved a

<sup>1</sup> Nestle, *Textual Criticism of the Greek Testament*, p. 266.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter ii.

silent, undisputed recognition in primitive times appears to afford conclusive proof that Christianity endorsed the statement therein contained. It seems worth while to add that this reference to the Ascension seems to show that the Appendix to S. Mark cannot be, as is sometimes said, a summary derived from S. John, since the latter contains no record of the Ascension at all. What S. Mark's narrative contained in its original form involves so many assumptions that any statement can be little better than a brilliant guess, and cannot possess solidity enough to form the basis of an argument on either side.

We turn next to the Gospel of S. Luke, and we have deliberately placed it in this order, with a view more readily to connect it with the same author's statements in the Acts.

The Revisers' Version is as follows :—

‘ And He led them out until they were over against Bethany: and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And it came to pass while He blessed them, He parted from them, and was carried up into Heaven. And they worshipped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.’

Such is the text. The margin, however, notes that the clauses ‘ and was carried up into Heaven, and they worshipped Him,’ are omitted by some ancient authorities. The words are, as a fact, omitted in two important MSS.—the Sinaitic and the Codex Bezaë.

A recent writer says 'they are wanting in the best MS.' This is inexact, and quite different from the cautious language of the Revisers, 'omitted by some ancient authorities.' The clauses are bracketed in Westcott and Hort's text, on the authority of the two MSS. mentioned, which to them was exceedingly great.

The absence of this important sentence in some ancient authorities certainly raises many questions. Is it an omission in the one case, or an interpolation in the other? To this inquiry conflicting answers have been given. Alford regards the absence of the passage as a copyist's accidental omission. To exclude it from the text on this account he considers rash in the extreme. Meyer says that even if the words were interpolated, still the Ascension is implied in the words 'He parted from them,' the incident itself being reserved for the opening of the Acts, S. Luke's second book.

Westcott and Hort, on the contrary, say that the 'text was evidently inserted from an assumption that a separation from the disciples at the close of the Gospel must be the Ascension. The Ascension apparently did not lie within the proper scope of the Gospels, as seen in their genuine texts: its true place was at the head of the Acts of the Apostles, as the preparation for the Day of Pentecost, and thus the beginning of the history of the Church.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Vol. ii. Appendix, p. 73.



It would be deeply interesting to know how the early Fathers read the concluding passage of the Gospel of S. Luke. But unhappily the evidence is very small. The Commentary of S. Ambrose stops with the journey to Emmaus. S. Chrysostom discusses the other verses, but not the verse where this momentous passage is involved. S. Jerome read the sentence just as it stands in the Revised Version of the English to-day. He seems to have accepted the disputed clause without hesitation. S. Cyril of Alexandria commenting on this Gospel says, 'He blessed them, and advancing a little, was carried up into Heaven, that He might become co-partner of the Father's throne.'

But suppose the passage an interpolation, the question still remains, Was this last interview recorded in St. Luke's Gospel the Ascension, or not? Was the interpolator correct when he understood that it was?

Now it is significant that in all the post-Resurrection manifestations, the fact of our Lord's withdrawal is mentioned only twice—in the house at Emmaus, and also here. At Emmaus He vanished out of their sight. On the present occasion He parted from them. But the special feature of the present is that He blessed them; and that it was while He blessed them that He parted from them. It is the fact of departure in the act of blessing which gives peculiar character to this interview, and not the mere fact that it was the last which the Gospel narrates.

On no other occasion is He recorded to have left them in this way. Certainly the manner of departure was suggestive of completeness and finality. Was it not, then, the occasion of the Ascension?

After all, the omission of the passage in S. Luke's Gospel depends on the value assigned to the two great MSS. already mentioned. And there are indications among the most recent writers of a belief that the last word has not yet been said on the real value of the disputed words. The critic Blass, after noting that this passage on the Ascension in S. Luke is 'by no means attested by all manuscripts,' and that 'besides the known text there is another having very good attestation,'<sup>1</sup> gives the following account of the arguments on the other side:—'It has been argued that S. Luke gives another testimony for the same fact by saying as early as ix. 51 "when the time was approaching that He should be received up," and that by mentioning the Ascension here, he clearly indicates his intention of relating it at its proper place. Moreover, as the reading in verse 52, "they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the Temple praising and blessing God," is universally attested, the words left out by a part of our witnesses can hardly be supposed to have been originally absent from the narrative. If the Apostles had seen their Lord carried up to heaven, there was a

<sup>1</sup> *Philology of the Gospels*, p. 138.

reason both for their rejoicing and for their being continually in the Temple, that is to say, not expecting any more appearances of Him ; but if the appearance related had ended in like manner as the other, this sequel becomes quite incomprehensible.<sup>1</sup>

Blass himself would explain the difference between the manuscripts by the assumption of a double authentic text of the Gospel, one omitting the passage, the other containing it ; the latter being 'the earlier copy and representing more truly S. Luke's original writing.' The subsequent omission by S. Luke of what he had originally written was due to the fuller account of the Ascension written by him at the beginning of the Acts. Such is the theory of Friedrich Blass. It considers the passage omitted by certain authorities as an authentic statement of the third Evangelist.

To this discussion on the text may be added the conclusion of one of the most recent writers on S. Luke. On the words 'He parted from them,'<sup>2</sup> Dr. Plummer observes, 'This refers to the Ascension, whatever view we take of the disputed words which follow. Weiss holds that if the doubtful words are rejected we must interpret "He parted from them" of mere withdrawal, as after previous appearances ; and that St. Luke purposely reserves the narrative of the Ascension for the Acts. But at least a *final* withdrawal is meant. It is evident that verse 50

<sup>1</sup> *Philology of the Gospels*, p. 139.

<sup>2</sup> S. Luke xxiv. 51.

[‘ And He led them out until they were over against Bethany: and He lifted up His hands and blessed them ’] is preparatory to a final withdrawal, and that verses 52-53 [‘ And they . . . returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the Temple blessing God ’] are subsequent to such an event. And was there ever a time when S. Luke could have known of Christ’s final withdrawal without knowing of the Ascension? In the Acts<sup>1</sup> he expressly states that the “former treatise” contained an account of the work of Jesus “until the day in which He was received up.” He himself, therefore, considered that he had recorded the Ascension in his Gospel.’<sup>2</sup>

On the whole, then, a study of the Gospels in reference to the Ascension leads us to the following conclusions: that the main stress of primitive testimony was concentrated upon the Resurrection, which is viewed as the consummation of the Gospel narrative; that the Ascension is implied, alluded to, suggested, but comparatively eclipsed by the Resurrection, to which it belongs as the natural sequel and conclusion. It is obviously also correct to say that the Ascension was regarded rather in its relation to the founding of the institution of the Church than in connection with the Saviour’s earthly life.

2. We come then to the description in the Acts. Attention has often been called to the apparent

<sup>1</sup> Acts i. 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Plummer, *Commentary on S. Luke*.

discrepancy between the reference to the Ascension in S. Luke's Gospel and that in the opening chapter of the Acts. If we possessed the Gospel only, the natural inference would be that the Ascension happened on Easter Day; that is, if we take the narrative as continuous, in the absence of marked intervals of time. Yet the Ascension is definitely stated in the Acts to have happened after the lapse of forty days. It is often said that S. Luke's information was meantime increased. But if S. Luke had already contemplated the composition of his second work, is it not just as likely that he deliberately closed the Gospel with the briefest reference to a subject which he intended to describe more fully afterwards in the Acts of the Apostles? There seems a religious appropriateness in opening the history of the Church with an ampler unfolding of the great thought with which the Gospel concludes. The Ascension has a double relationship. It consummates the Redeemer's own career. It initiates a new dispensation of Grace. Consequently it might either be placed as the close of the Life or as the beginning of the Institution.

3. In the teaching of the Epistles it is not always easy to determine whether the writer contemplates exclusively the spiritual exaltation of Christ in glory, or whether he includes the visible Ascension as the process by which that exaltation was achieved. There

are passages where a reference to heavenly glory would satisfy the sense. There are others where the very language suggests that the visible Ascension was before the writer's mind. When S. Paul writes, 'It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us,'<sup>1</sup> it is possible to say that he merges the Ascension in the Resurrection, and contemplates not so much the process as the result. But it is also possible to say that the visible process of ascension through the clouds was alike that which pervaded his utterances and that which was present to the primitive reader's mind. The same Apostle's use of the words, 'When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men,'<sup>2</sup> is open to a similar construction. One interpreter finds in it the physical Ascension, another merely the antithesis to the descending into the lower parts of the earth. Again, the summary of the faith given in the First Epistle to Timothy—'God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory'<sup>3</sup>—contains expressions which those who know of the visible Ascension can hardly dissociate from that event, but which undoubtedly contains no necessary proof of the acceptance of that belief.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii. 34.<sup>2</sup> Ephesians iv. 8.<sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. iii. 16.



Somewhat similar ambiguities meet us in the teaching of S. Peter. He says that 'Baptism doth also now save us . . . by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, Who is gone into Heaven, and is on the right hand of God.'<sup>1</sup> Here we have the Resurrection and the session at God's right hand. Between them as their connecting link the phrase 'Who is gone into heaven.' Does it mean the visible Ascension? or the ultimate end of that Ascension, the exaltation in heaven? Here, as in other instances, interpreters divide. If the fact of the Ascension is presupposed, then beyond all doubt S. Peter selected these words with reference to the fact. But it may be true that the words themselves will not avail as a historical proof that Christ visibly ascended in their midst. But when S. Peter is reported to have defined the limits of the Apostolic witness as 'beginning from the Baptism of John unto that same day that He was taken up from us,'<sup>2</sup> it is difficult to resist the impression that it is the visible Ascension to which S. Peter alludes, more particularly considering that S. Luke has placed the phrase in significant juxtaposition to the narrative of that Ascension.

On the whole it may be said that, while the Epistles give great prominence to the thought of our Lord's exaltation, they subordinate the process by which that exaltation was achieved; nevertheless they

<sup>1</sup> 1 S. Peter iii. 21, 22.

<sup>2</sup> Acts i. 22.



express themselves precisely as they would do if the fact of the visible Ascension were tacitly assumed as known in the general first principles of Christian conviction.

## II

After considering the Ascension in relation to Scripture we may consider it in relation to Christ. Recent criticism has denied the necessity for any visible Ascension. We may be ready to recognise in this an element of truth. A distinction should certainly be drawn between the exaltation of Christ in the spiritual realm and the visible process of His Ascension from the earth. His spiritual, invisible exaltation in glory was an absolute necessity. But can we say the same of His visible Ascension through the air? Let us remark that from the hour of His Resurrection, Christ already belonged to the spiritual sphere. The Resurrection Body of Jesus Christ was from the first a spiritual body—adapted, that is to say, for life in heavenly conditions. There is indeed a theory widely prevalent in the Lutheran communities that the great forty days was a period in which the risen Body passed through a process of gradual perfecting. But the theory has never gained much ground beyond Lutheran limits.<sup>1</sup> Nor is it really

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Ellicott, however, says that the view is, if not distinctly confirmed by the sacred narrative . . . still by no means inconsistent

corroborated by Scripture. The Gospels do indeed describe an ever-increasing unearthliness in the manifestations of the risen Christ; but this is part of the evidential economy, and not part of the spiritualising of the risen Body itself. The whole series of Easter appearances were miraculous re-entrances into the realm of things visible. They cannot conceivably describe a real process in the spiritualising of the Body. This is increasingly the conviction of modern theological reflection. Now, if this conception of the nature of the risen Body be correct, it seems clear that a visible rising up into the clouds was not the necessary, because not the only conceivable, means of His exaltation. Exaltation is one thing, the particular process of Ascension is another. A physical going upward is certainly not the only conceivable manner of departure from the precincts of the visible, as the instance at Emmaus shows. For anything we know to the contrary, the last self-manifestation of the risen Master might have ended like that at Emmaus by a simple vanishing out of their sight. Accordingly it is not possible to affirm positively the necessity, so far as Christ Himself was concerned, that His first departure from the Apostles should take the form of a visible ascending through the terrestrial atmosphere. We may so far distinguish the physical

with it, and deserves perhaps some slight consideration.—*Historical Lectures*, p. 397.

fact from its spiritual counterpart as to say that the latter would be true even if the former had never occurred. If Christ had passed direct invisibly from the grave on Easter morning to the right hand of God, it would be just as true on the heavenly side of things that He was really exalted and glorified. Once more, then, the Ascension was not the only possible means of His removal.

## III

But if the visible Ascension was unnecessary for the Master's sake, it was for the sake of the Apostles very necessary indeed.

1. To begin with, it put an effective close to a period of uncertainty and suspense. So long as the Apostolic life was liable to sudden unexpected reappearances of the risen Lord, so long it would be impossible to begin the mission to the world. The emotion, the strain, inseparable from such unforeseen returns would not be conducive to a calm, collected temper, or to the routine of daily labour. And while no doubt He might definitely have closed their suspense by a verbal assurance that He would not return, yet the vision of His physical Ascension would impress the fact upon their imagination as no mere instructions could be expected to do.

It is curious to notice the confidence with which

recent critics declare that our Lord must have expressly told His Apostles that this was the very last time He would visibly appear to them on the earth, for otherwise, it is significantly urged, the sudden cessation of appearing would have seemed unaccountable, and possibly a discouragement to faith.<sup>1</sup> He parted from them for the last time in such a way that they knew it was the last.<sup>2</sup> This is precisely the first necessity for a visible Ascension. It was for the Apostles an emblem of completion and finality. It suggested the termination of the period of visible contact with the Son of Man, and the commencement of another period under conditions of a different kind.

2. But there was a greater reason than this. The Ascension of Jesus Christ was, like His Resurrection, full of profound dogmatic significance. That rising upward through the air obviously signified complete independence of the material conditions under which all earthly life exists; it suggested the perfect translation of human nature into an unearthly state; it corrected those materialised conceptions which His appearance in solid bodily form, and His reception of food, although necessitated by evidential requirements, had inevitably produced; it must have thrilled them with a new sort of heavenly triumph; it spoke of entrance into the highest bliss beside God's throne;

<sup>1</sup> B. Weiss.

<sup>2</sup> Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, s.v. 'Ascension.'

it suggested that He was henceforth in kingly glory dispensing gifts and graces to the children of men. These are among the obvious conceptions which the Ascension must have conveyed; it embodied almost endless theology condensed into one visible presentation. It appealed with a reality which probably no abstract dogmatic instructions would ever have possessed. Able men who in our own day describe the discourses of S. John's Gospel as mysticism pure and simple might be expected to allow the advantage of conceptions conveyed through outward incident. And we may fairly urge that the Apostolic ideas of the exaltation of Jesus Christ owed their strength and their substance to the day when He passed visibly upward from their midst into the clouds of heaven.

The Ascension is sometimes strangely regarded as a legendary expression of belief in the exaltation of Christ, as if the conviction that Christ was exalted produced the story of His visible translation through the air. The exact converse is the truth. The visible Ascension created belief in His exaltation. It seems to us a simple, incontestable fact that the Apostles were not of the class who revel first in abstract speculations, and then clothe their theories in suitable concrete form.

On the contrary, their minds are only awakened by the impressions of external facts to a slow and

laborious conception of their meaning. The very richness and prolific character of the Apostolic thoughts on the exaltation of Jesus seems to demonstrate that such wealth of conception could not possibly have satisfied itself in inventing the few and meagre lines of the visible Ascension; it must have blossomed into wondrous exuberance of legendary expression had it been of the legendary kind; whereas conversely this wealth of conception is perfectly normal and natural, regarded as the product of a simple but supernatural fact. Thus both the character of the men and the nature of their assertions lead to the same result.

#### IV

The Ascension was necessary for the Apostles. Let us come nearer still. It is necessary for ourselves.

1. When we are told that physical Ascension belongs to the childhood of the race it is natural to ask when the childhood of the race was past. Taking the human race as a whole, bearing in mind the endless stages of racial and national development, we shall probably hesitate before we draw a dividing line between its childhood and its maturity. In many respects the human race is still exceedingly unformed, yes, very young. While it is possible to indicate broad tracts of human life, scarcely emerged, if at all, from the rudest barbarity, from the crudest

animalism, we feel that wholesale generalisations on the childhood of the race as something past rouse more inquiries than they will readily set at rest. The childhood of the race! If there are nations qualified to say, 'When I became a man I put away childish things,' there are also nations which ought to say, 'Ah! Lord God, I am a child, I cannot speak.' And the symbolism appropriate for childhood may be still invaluable for them. But farther: what is certain is that our forefathers, in the centuries before that childhood of the race was past, believed in the exaltation of Jesus Christ, simply because they believed in the literal reality of the physical Ascension through the clouds. Christ's removal through the air has done this: it has enabled millions of men to credit the ideal conception of His glorified state.

2. Then, again: if the childhood of the race were past—which it is not—at any rate the childhood of each generation remains. Each individual begins his spiritual development as a child. The Ascension, then, admittedly appeals to the child. Which of us did not learn our freshest, most thrilling thoughts of the glory of Jesus through the instrumentality of that pictorial presentation? And will the day really come when for childhood it will be otherwise? Shall the instructors of the children endeavour to bid them dissociate the symbol from the idea, retain the abstract conception of glory while dismissing as



legendary the concrete vehicle of its communication? Will it ever come to this? Or must it not for childhood, so long as there are children to be enlightened, be as it has been hitherto, that abstract conceptions must be conveyed through historic form? When Dupanloup, once teaching a child, mentioned the word 'glory' he was interrupted by the child's question: 'Bishop, what is glory?' And the venerable old man was silent. He could not say. Ah! what is glory? How describe it to the mind of the child? Has not the Ascension helped us to the reply? Has it not taught many? Did it not teach us as children thoughts no abstract terms could convey—thoughts we certainly could not formulate—they were too high, too true—thoughts of the glory of Jesus our Lord?

3. But once again. A gifted and learned critic of our time has told us that he can well imagine that many minds exist of such a type that for them, at any rate, a physical journey up through clouds is a necessary medium of belief in the abstract idea. It is not children that he has in view, but a large, perhaps partially cultivated, multitude of mankind. May we not fairly ask whether in this case it is not also conceivable that the Almighty, Who is well aware of this uncultivated multitude and their profoundly human needs, should have provided that symbolic medium for the conveyance of the idea which the

critic himself acknowledges to be apparently necessary for them?

4. And finally, if there are some among us able to retain the idea while dispensing with the symbol which conveyed it, yet admittedly they themselves have only reached this standpoint as the outcome of the long development wrought through belief in the historic reality of the symbol. And while the exaltation of Jesus may be theoretically separable from the concrete incident of His visible Ascension, it is a very grave and serious consideration whether it is practically separable without permanent loss to human faith. Where the whole human race is concerned it is dangerous to limit our thoughts to the capabilities of a chosen few. The more one contemplates the service which the visible Ascension has rendered, and is still rendering, to religious belief in the ultimate exaltation of men, the more one is constrained to regard it as a divinely selected instrument deliberately adapted for the work which it has performed. But then, if the Ascension was ever true, it is so still. The noblest conception of human exaltation has been historically based on belief in the visible Ascension of Christ. It seems incompatible with divine veracity to say that the noblest conception has been based upon a dream.

## V

There are one or two special difficulties which this subject presents to modern life.

It is undoubtedly true that the Ascension is alien from our modes of thought. Whereas in former ages it conduced to faith, it now presents obstructions. But, then, it must be understood as part and parcel of one connected scheme. It is often said, and may be unhesitatingly admitted, that the evidence for the Ascension is entirely inadequate if separated from the series to which it belongs and from the significance which it really possesses. It is obvious that belief in the Ascension presupposes belief in the Resurrection of Christ. The Ascension is not an isolated event. It is one in a series—the last of the series of self-manifestations of the risen Lord. It exhibits the same characteristics of evidential purpose and instruction.

The main difficulties in the physical Ascension of Christ are :—

1. Its relation to the laws of nature.
2. Its localisation of the spiritual region.

1. Men have been exercised to know how a solid material body could defy the principles of gravitation and disappear among the clouds. It was a theory of

certain independent thinkers of the second century<sup>1</sup> that Christ redistributed the material elements of His earthly body among the earthly departments from which they had been taken, and thus the body being dissolved into air He ascended into Heaven without it. This was necessarily rejected by the Church<sup>2</sup> because it reduced the Resurrection to a mere continuance of the soul. Yet it might be a reaction from an acutely materialised conception of the risen Body of Christ, and a sincere endeavour to remove the difficulties attendant upon such views. And there is a sense in which it does represent a truth. But the whole difficulty in the relation of the Ascension to the laws of nature rests upon the assumption that the Resurrection Body of Christ was still in its former condition. Yet, whatever may be correct, that assumption is absolutely false. Christ did not resume His Body under the same conditions as before. The normal conditions of the Resurrection Body were the converse to those of His earthly career. The whole process of re-appearances in material surroundings was an accommodation to the requirements of the Apostles' faith. Thus we are not contemplating a body in the same conditions as ours, acting in defiance of the rudimentary laws of nature, but a body for the time

<sup>1</sup> Apelles, disciple of Marcion. See Pearson, Art. vi. p. 515, Sinker's edition, and *Dict. Christian Biography*, i. 869.

<sup>2</sup> See Tertullian, *de Carne Christi*; S. Augustine, *Hæres.* 23; Epiphanius, *Hæres.* 44.

made visible, of whose capacities and limitations we can know practically nothing. All objections, therefore, of this kind rest upon a misconception. They do not touch the subject.

2. The objection that the Ascension seems to localise the spiritual region to somewhere above our heads, is really an objection against all symbolic action and illustration. It would make most of the symbolism of life impossible. The presentation of offerings at the Altar has been objected to as meaningless unless a Hand came down from above and received them. This can only mean the existence of a type of mind to which symbolism does not appeal. To many the objection will appear prosaic literalism. When we pray by an open grave we almost instinctively gaze heavenward rather than downward where the corruptible elements lie; but the act is open to the same objection, it assumes that God is above the sky rather than underneath. Constituted as we are, half spiritual and half material, we are compelled to self-expression in forms inconsistent with metaphysical exactness. Why should not the highest Christian verities permit, or even require, a similar expression? If it be said that the localising of Heaven beyond the clouds was the general theory of those bygone days, but one which modern thought has long outgrown, still, after all, if the conception of Heaven is capable of symbolic representa-

tion, it seems impossible to exclude the form of local transition. So long as language describes the dead as the departed it must be justifiable to represent the exalted as the ascended. Thus the objection would be fatal to much more than it desires to destroy. And certainly where the principle of the Incarnation is understood and accepted these objections will not long be permitted to prevail.

Certainly the conditions of that ascended life into which our Lord has passed are beyond our knowledge. Men say that Heaven is character rather than locality. But the question is, Can the spiritual body be found somewhere in space? We know, indeed, that the perfect human state consists not in becoming pure spirit, but in the body's adaptation as the perfect expression of spirit. The spiritual body is not body absorbed into spirit; it is body still, although existing under spiritual conditions. But what those conditions are it is impossible with our present knowledge to say.

## CHAPTER X

### THE DOGMATIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESURRECTION

A STUDY of the Resurrection of Christ might begin in one of two ways. It might begin with the question of fact. The essential interest lies in the inquiry, Did it happen? The whole question is a question of fact. But, on the other hand, a study might begin with the fact's significance. The leading facts of history are not bare facts. They are filled with living significance. They hold their place in virtue of their illuminative power. They have their antecedents and their consequences. There is a philosophy of facts. No fact can be fully understood unless it is seen in its meaning.

This is most true of the Resurrection of Christ. The mere question whether a dead man once revived is not the question which would rivet the universal attention of modern thought. The vast literature on the Resurrection of Christ demonstrates this at least,



if nothing else, that the Resurrection is really no question of merely barren fact. Men would not bestow this interest on a mediæval miracle. After all, as such, what would it matter? It would matter as being a divine manifestation, certainly. But it could not have the same all-attracting, momentous, universal appeal that belongs to the Resurrection of Christ. The Resurrection of Christ is inseparable from its universal significance. In Christianity, as in all other departments of human life, the divorce of the historic from the dogmatic is an absolute impossibility. The fact of the Resurrection cannot be appreciated or understood, apart from the question of its significance.<sup>1</sup>

1. Let us, then, study the dogmatic significance of Christ's Resurrection. This is constantly omitted from consideration. And yet it is impossible to do justice to the great theme without it. From the Christian standpoint, what does the Resurrection mean?

Now for answer it is clear that, as human life now is, Resurrection stands as the antithesis to Death. To appreciate the former, we must understand the latter. Our first inquiry, therefore, will be, What is the Christian doctrine of death?

The Christian doctrine is that human death is not

<sup>1</sup> Krüger, *Auferstehung*, p. 3.

natural but abnormal, not the original divine intention, but self-induced through human perversity. Man, according to Christianity, was originally created in the image of God. By this is meant constitutional resemblance, consisting in the possession of personality which never could be lost; and moral resemblance, consisting in the condition of the affections and the will. This latter, since it depended on free co-operation, was capable of becoming entirely lost, or of conversion into increasingly closer resemblance by the continued action of the human will and the grace of God. Consequently two alternative developments lay before mankind: the one, of ever-increasing self-identification in affection and purpose with God; the other, of antagonism and discord, which is sin. Man chose the latter. The result of his choice was death—death in every sense of which the word is capable, including therefore death of the body. The intimate correspondence between the physical and the spiritual is a fundamental principle of Christianity. Neither the Old Testament nor the New regards human death as natural.

Whatever interpretation, whether historical or allegorical, or both, be placed upon the Genesis-narrative of the Fall of Man, at any rate its main conceptions would seem unmistakable. It assuredly teaches that an intimate connection exists between moral evil and physical death.

The warning—‘in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die’—would appear as a meaningless menace if addressed to men who would have died in any case. The restriction of the solemn word ‘death’ to moral or spiritual meanings was not present to the Hebrew mind. Inclusive of all possible deaths the term well may be, exclusive of physical dissolution it cannot be. The separation also from the Tree of Life may conceivably signify many things. But the one thing that it must signify, is death of the body. In truth, it is no question here of accessories divisible from the main account. The whole drift of the record implies that moral actions have physical results. This is the obvious meaning, and it is the construction which the Hebrew mind has placed upon it. When the author of Ecclesiasticus wrote that ‘of the Woman came the beginning of sin, and through her we all die,’<sup>1</sup> he assuredly taught that the Woman was the cause of physical death, and that this was due to her priority in transgression. When the writer of Esdras exclaims, ‘Thou . . . gavest a body unto Adam . . . and unto him Thou gavest commandment to love Thy way: which he transgressed, and immediately Thou appointedst death in him and in his generations,’<sup>2</sup> the dominant thought is, obviously, death of the body. If the distinct references in the Old Testament are few, the

<sup>1</sup> Ecclesiasticus xxv. 24.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Esdras iii. 5, 6, 7.

implications are frequent and clear. Death to the Psalmist is a sign of the divine displeasure :—

‘When Thou with rebukes dost chasten man for sin,  
Thou makest his beauty to consume away  
Like as it were a moth fretting a garment.’<sup>1</sup>

The moral and spiritual here invades the physical sphere. To the Hebrew moralist it is just the same. ‘God created man to be immortal.’<sup>2</sup>

And this too is the Apostolic teaching. Perfectly in accordance with Genesis, S. Paul asserts that ‘by man came death.’<sup>3</sup> Again he tells us how this came about: ‘the body is dead because of sin.’<sup>4</sup> And elsewhere: ‘by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.’<sup>5</sup> It would be difficult to be more explicit. Undoubtedly the idea of death is not to be limited in the Pauline doctrine to physical dissolution, but it no less certainly includes it. Death as a consequence of sin is viewed as affecting the soul and then the body, but the body as well as the soul.

Indeed there is something profoundly significant in the selection of the phrase ‘the second death’ to describe an unnatural and permanent perversion of human destiny. If death were the natural and normal experience of man irrespective of sin, the phrase would be singularly inappropriate to denote external penalty.

<sup>1</sup> Psalm xxxix. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Wisdom ii. 23; cf. i. 13-16.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 21.

<sup>4</sup> Romans viii. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Romans v. 12.

Death, then, according to Christianity, is not a debt of nature but the wages of sin.

So far the Christian teaching. On the other side it will be said that death is a natural law, affecting the inferior orders of vitality, the animal and the plant as well as man; prevailing everywhere with exemplary catholicity, and extending its influence into periods antecedent to the existence of mankind. Obviously that which preceded man's existence cannot be created by his defects. That would be a theological counterpart to the fable of the wolf and the lamb.

Remarks of this kind enjoy to-day a widespread popularity. However, in behalf of the Christian interpretation of Death there is still much to be remembered.

In the first place the death of a man is not precisely similar to that of a plant or even of an animal. There is external resemblance certainly, but there is also profound inner dissimilarity. For in the one case you have what in the other you have not, an animal constitution made the instrument and the organ of a spiritual personality. It is this which completely differentiates a human death from all other externally similar occurrences in the world of nature. What may be allowed as normal and natural in the one has never ceased to appear enigmatical and abnormal in the other. Let the lamentations of the bereaved

attest the truth of this. Confronted with our dead, we can scarcely do other than exclaim, 'An enemy hath done this!' The mourner finds himself in this respect naturally Christian.

And in the next place, while it may seem at first sight almost conclusive against the Christian theory to say that death is a universal law, the necessary antithesis to birth, that increase by the one necessitates decrease by the other, this is by no means conclusive on further thought. Doubtless successive generations imply successive disappearances, but death is not the only conceivable way in which transition to a higher life might be effected. Death is the existing, but not the necessary, antithesis to birth. And the fact of its universality no more proves its necessity than the equally universal fact of our sinfulness proves moral imperfection to be normal and part of the original will of God.

Of course there is an obvious sense in which death may be considered 'natural.' The possession of an animal organisation renders man naturally liable to dissolution. But liability to an experience does not necessitate that experience. We are all liable to many diseases which providentially we may never have to endure. And the Christian theory is that man was physically liable to a dissolution which nevertheless, contingently on righteousness, he was never intended to undergo. The normal ideal development

of man is through righteousness into life. Transition into a higher state of existence was not meant to be effected through death, but without it. But such transition is not a natural endowment, it is a gift. It depends on supernatural Grace. But that supernatural Grace which lifted the animal constitution above the necessity of death was lost by sin. Man had linked the capability of dying with a lamentable necessity of dying. He was no longer the spiritually gifted, but merely the natural man. The secret of his strength, the force which would have transmuted the physical nature into a finer instrument, appropriate for the activities of the soul in a higher state, was lost; consequently the animal constitution, deprived of that sustaining power, pursued its natural tendency to dissolution.

Thus human death is natural or unnatural according to the point of view. It is natural enough when viewed in relation to life as it now exists. It is perfectly natural, nay inevitable, to an unprotected physical organism. It is the natural and, as things are now, the invariable course. But it is not natural at all, if by nature we mean the divine ideal at creation. It is not natural in the sense of being the original design, the only possible issue, the normal development of human existence.

Now the solidarity of mankind, the representative character of the first man in whom the human



race was embodied, condensed, and recapitulated, involved that the losses of the individual were the losses of the entire race. 'Death passed upon all men,'<sup>1</sup> says S. Paul. Adam could not transmit what he did not possess. He transmitted human nature in the condition to which he had reduced it. The whole race lies universally under the Law of Death.

Then followed the historic, expansive, and social development of mankind, of which the Bible sketches the outline and principal characteristics. It was an invariable record of sinfulness. But simultaneously with this process of sinful development there was silently being laid the foundation for human perfecting. We are bidden to watch the purpose of God according to selection. The selection of a family and a nation, of Abraham and of Israel, is for the benefit of mankind at large. It was intended to provide an arena wherein the religious development of a sinless personality under human conditions could be possible. Thus the apparent exclusiveness is more than justified by the ultimate universality of its aim. The process continued until the fullness of the time had come. Then at the special stage appropriate for introduction of a new force into mankind, a stage for which the whole antecedent evolution of humanity was the preparation (and which may, in some degree, be compared with

<sup>1</sup> Romans v. 12.

the crises when existence matured into life, and life into consciousness, and consciousness into reason); God brought Himself into personal union with the human race, and made His entrance into human history. This is the Incarnation. It means the assumption of the common constituents of human nature by a divine Person, His self-investiture in the flesh. It does not mean His adoption of a human person. This all-important distinction has vital consequences. For the former doctrine involves the self-identity of God with the entire human race; whereas the latter would only involve the favouritism of an arbitrarily selected individual.

This assumption of human nature by a divine Person involved many consequences.

1. The first consequence was the sanctification of that which He assumed, namely, human mind, heart, will and body; and, consequently, its moral perfection. The moral uniqueness of Jesus Christ follows naturally from the premises. It is accounted for by the fact of His unique personality. Thus Christ realised in human life the ideal of moral perfection. He realised the ideal which eternally pre-existed in the mind of God concerning man. He has thereby revealed to mankind what the human ideal is. He has done immeasurably more. For His embodiment of human perfection is a prophecy and a promise of the destiny of millions. What man in Him is

already, men individually are also ultimately to become.

2. But the assumption of human nature by the Son of God involved not only its moral but its physical perfection. We have already seen that, while physical death is natural in the sense of being the obvious disintegration to which an animal constitution must be liable if left to itself, it is not natural in the higher sense; for the animal constitution of man was never intended to be left to itself, but rather to be transmuted by higher power into the organ of a higher life. According to Christian doctrine, it was the introduction of moral evil which converted liability to death into necessity of death.

Now here is the point at which that Christian conception can be tested. For if that theory be true, it will follow that moral perfection must involve exemption from the necessity of physical death. Christ was morally perfect. Accordingly, He was under no necessity to die. He might have passed into the larger world without experience of physical death.

Is this line of thought corroborated by our Lord's demeanour and assertions? Assuredly it is. He solemnly declared His own exemption from the law of death.

‘Therefore doth My Father love Me because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I

have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.'<sup>1</sup>

Human lips here make a claim to unique relationship with the Law of Death. The speaker declares Himself to stand beyond the range of death's invariable dominion. That is a claim which could only be justified on the ground of His sinless superiority. Unique relationship to death is founded on His unique moral state.

Viewed in this light the Transfiguration, so enigmatical otherwise, is seen to be full of living significance. The Sinless Exception among men ascends the hill, a wondrous change passes across His human nature, the moral glory within transfuses and transfigures the vesture of the flesh. It is the kind of change which would probably have passed over Adam had he kept true to the Holy Will, and so advanced along the line of a sinless development. Our Lord stands on the verge of the other world. Moses and Elijah, the Law and the Prophets, both appear to welcome Him into the spiritual state. He could pass at once by a painless transition into glory if so He willed. Death is the wages of sin. He has no sin. Therefore death has no claim upon Him. 'The Prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me.'

The offer of transition into life without enduring the sin-entailed experience must be made to the

<sup>1</sup> S. John x. 17, 18.

perfect human being. His perfectly natural life might advance to its perfectly natural completion. Such is the offer made upon the mountain. But it is not accepted. He turns away from the heavenly communion and the open heaven, and speaks of another conclusion to His earthly life : His decease which He must shortly accomplish at Jerusalem.

3. Why was the offer not accepted ? That brings us to a further consideration, the consideration of Redemption. We have seen that, according to the Christian conception, we have here a divine Person self-invested in the flesh.

If the Incarnation had occurred in a sinless environment, we may suppose that the life of Christ would have terminated with the Transfiguration. But He stands within the precincts of sin-stained humanity. And with them He is by love and sympathy, although, of course, not for an instant by concurrence, completely identified. And further, it is here that the conditions of His entrance into history reveal their meaning. It is evident that, since He did not adopt a human individual, but assumed to His own personality the contents of human nature, He placed Himself in relationship, not with one solitary individual man, but with humanity at large. The consequence is that humanity is embodied in Him as it is in no one else except, and that for different reasons, in the person of the first human being. In other words,

Christ is the new Head of the human race. There are, in fact, in all humanity, only two really representative persons, only two in whom the human race is condensed and summarised. The one is Adam, the other is Christ. Here we reach the famous Pauline antithesis.

Now, just as the actions and decisions of the first representative man affect the destinies of all subsequent generations, so do those of the second. The redemptive work of the Second Man (Who is the Lord from Heaven) cannot be understood unless this is borne in mind. He is to reverse for mankind, and more than reverse, what His predecessor has effected. He stands voluntarily identified with a sin-disordered race whose nature and whose lot He shares. Accordingly, He will not accept the painless transition into the higher state, which is the normal experience of His sinless character. He has redemptive work to do for mankind. That is the reason He speaks of His decease which He must shortly accomplish at Jerusalem. ('Must'—there is a divine necessity.) So He turns from the open heavens and the painless transition. The light dies away as He descends to the stern and piteous realities of human grief and pain and helplessness in the crowd below the hill. He goes, to make the complete yet perfectly voluntary sacrifice. But in that voluntary surrender of a life which need not die there comes the reward of His Father's expressed approval: 'This is My beloved Son;

hear Him.'<sup>1</sup> And so, Humanity in the person of the Representative Man, the Representative Man identified with the race, goes down into the valley of the shadow of death to make an act of reparation. Strictly speaking, it is a reparation which it is quite impossible for sinfulness to make, because sinfulness incapacitates from realisation of the nature of sin. And therefore, Sinless Perfection makes that reparation in behalf of mankind. With that reparation humanity must slowly, and individually and collectively, identify itself as far as its imperfections will allow. Hence then the death of Christ; that strange anomaly: the death of the one human Being that ever lived Who stood under no personal obligation and necessity to die, and yet Who nevertheless died; Who, being sinless, accepted the penalty of the sinful.

4. Now the whole course of all our previous thoughts, the entire series of the Christian conceptions: about death and the Incarnation; about the willing self-identity of the morally perfect One with the mass of human imperfection; about the labours of Redemption; about the divine Person behind that assumed human nature—all these lead strenuously onward to one irresistible conclusion, the necessity of the Resurrection.

This has been challenged.<sup>2</sup> It has been said, if

<sup>1</sup> S. Luke ix. 35.

<sup>2</sup> Keim, *Jesus of Nazara*, vi. 339.



His Sinlessness involved His Resurrection, it ought rather to have prevented His Death. The answer is, surely, already clear. The sinlessness of Jesus did prevent His Death so far as concerns its personal necessity. But the moral perfection of Jesus could not prevent, nay, it prompted and promoted and consummated, His willing self-identity with the human race, His altruistic acceptance of a lot by no means His. Surely the voluntary acceptance of an avoidable experience need never be confused with submission to an unavoidable necessity. Once more let it be repeated that all our thoughts converge on the necessity of the Saviour's Resurrection. Submission to Death by the only human Being Who stood under no personal servitude to the law of death may well be of untold significance alike in the moral and spiritual and intellectual spheres. It calls aloud for Resurrection as its heavenly counterpart. Resurrection, otherwise the victory remains with the law of death. There would be otherwise no sign, no hint, that death is overcome. The Resurrection of Christ means that His human Nature resumes the normal development, interrupted and broken through human sin. Resurrection means the divine restoration to Him of that Life voluntarily yielded in behalf of humanity. Along all the converging lines of Christian thought—granting its fundamental positions—is reached the one conclusion: Resurrection.

It is simply impossible from the Christian standpoint that anything else should come.

In the Resurrection, then, Christ re-appears, manifested as victorious over death, and under new physical conditions, conditions of glory. Human nature is now seen for the first time in all history in its really perfected state. The physical glory suggested at the Transfiguration is now carried through to its permanent completion.

The Body is now endowed with totally new capacities and transmuted into a finer organ and instrument of the personal activities. The antagonism between the physical and the spiritual is done away. There are wondrous mysterious suggestions of identity and yet of change between the Body that died and the Body that rose. The conditions of its existence appear almost reversed.

And all this revelation of the risen Christ is prophetic of the physical destinies of mankind. He is the first-fruits, the sample, the representative, the anticipation of experiences awaiting all. Thus in Christ is the perfection of humanity. In His Resurrection it is seen morally and physically complete.

5. Then follows the Ascension, which occupies a level corresponding with the Transfiguration. Only the Ascension is a nobler form of entrance into the heavenly life. For it is the entrance after loving self-surrender for others, after redemptive sacrifice

and unmerited experience of the sorrows of death. You have but to contrast the life of Christ as terminating in the Transfiguration by a passionless ascent to glory with the life of Christ advancing through the Passion and Death to the same eternal heights, to realise how infinitely more majestic is the way He chose. It is the elevation of human nature, body and soul, from the lowest depths to the highest conceivable dignity. In the Ascension of Christ the spiritualised nature of man is lifted to its permanent dwelling-place beside God's throne. All this is prophetic of human destiny.

6. But the Christian scheme is not yet completed. It descends again to the arena of the common life on earth. For, according to Christianity, the main purpose of the Incarnation was neither instruction nor example, nor even forgiveness, but the infusion of a new vitality, the gift of power, the introduction into each separate human being of the spiritual principle of Christ's perfected human nature. And this is a work which the Resurrection has made possible. For it is at the Resurrection that His human nature is completely spiritualised. Thus the glorified Humanity of Christ becomes instrumental in producing a moral resurrection in Christians.

7. And even that is not all. The resurrection of Christ is the cause of the physical resurrection of mankind. This stupendous double claim to be the

cause of the moral resurrection of believers and the cause of the physical resurrection of the human race rests upon His own assertion: 'I am the Resurrection and the Life.'<sup>1</sup> And few things can be more evidentially significant than the fact that men recognised that Jesus Christ had spoken this creative expression. Its marvellous depth of harmony with everything that has gone before can hardly fail to be profoundly impressive.

## II

These are among the principal features in the dogmatic significance of the Resurrection. They suggest many important reflections. Among these I select the following.

1. In the first place, it is certain that the proclamation of the fact of the Resurrection preceded the explanation of its significance. The Galilæan Apostles taught that Christ was risen, long before they came to realise the amazing wealth of religious meaning which the fact contained. It was not that they constructed *a priori* theories and, after elaborating a dogmatic system vast and complex, took the astounding step of translating it from the realm of abstractions to the realm of fact. It was not first the theory and then the fact, but first the fact and then

<sup>1</sup> S. John xi. 25.

the theory. All the evidence, including the unconscious evidence of the narratives, demonstrates that they first proclaimed the Resurrection as historic, and afterwards gradually came to realise the depth of its significance.

That this is true may be seen in the early growth of ideas within the circle of the Twelve. Their conception of the meaning of the Resurrection during the great forty days is very remote indeed from a systematic, coherent theory. They ask Him even then, while they contemplate His risen Form, whether He will not at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel. They are still narrowed and restricted in mind to local, national, inadequate and half-materialised conceptions. They are still entangled in an obsolete past. They fail to realise as yet their later glorious idea of a universal spiritual community with the risen Christ as its enthroned, if invisible Head. There is as yet comparatively little elevation of theory within them. Thus evidently the fact precedes the theory, not the theory the fact.

The same holds good of their apostolic preaching from the earliest Whitsuntide. The significance assigned therein to the Resurrection is of the most elementary sort. The meaning of the Resurrection is limited to truths of the following kind—that the Psalms predicted it;<sup>1</sup> that it meant the elevation of Jesus to

<sup>1</sup> Acts ii. 31.

the position of Lord and Christ ;<sup>1</sup> that it showed Him to be the Holy One and the Just,<sup>2</sup> the Prince of Life Whom God had raised from the dead ;<sup>3</sup> that it was God glorifying His Son. Contrast all this with the significance of the Resurrection as realised by S. Paul in Romans and Corinthians. What wealth, what grandeur, what extensive, far-reaching conceptions ! The Resurrection is seen to involve a complete theory of human destiny. The simplicity, the comparative meagreness of the circle of Galilæan ideas, is all the more evidentially impressive when set over against the numerous aspects, the profound conceptions of the Pauline letters. It plainly shows that the assertion of the Resurrection as a fact was prior to theorising upon its meaning.

It is just a crucial instance in which the words hold good : ' these things understood not His disciples at the first.'

2. Secondly, let us remember that the Resurrection is not a separable incident, but a necessary link in a connected chain. When once its dogmatic significance is understood, it becomes obvious that the Resurrection cannot be detached from its place without involving the whole of Christianity in its overthrow. To cancel the Resurrection is to disorganise an entire system. The Divine Personality, the Incarnation, the Sinless Perfection, the physical

<sup>1</sup> Acts ii. 36.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* iii. 14.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* iii. 15.

Resurrection of our Lord, are all parts in a vast intellectual series. The abandonment of any necessities logically the abandonment of all.

This is conclusively proved by the history of belief. The older Unitarians endeavoured to unite belief in Christ's Sinless Perfection and literal Resurrection with denial of His personal Divinity. They believed that He rose from the dead, but viewed the Resurrection as nothing more than a miraculous certificate that His doctrine was true. This was perfectly in keeping with the prevalent philosophy of Locke and the popular notions of the 'reasonableness' of Christianity; but it failed completely to realise the far-reaching significance of the Resurrection. Reduced to a mere certificate of a messenger's veracity, the Resurrection was not likely to hold a permanent place. And, as we might expect, the later Unitarians abandoned it altogether. The change of opinion from Channing to Martineau is most significant. In the former our Lord's Divinity was gone: in the latter the Resurrection was gone also, and the Sinlessness with it. Could anything more conclusively establish the systematic character of Christian truth?<sup>1</sup> Men may temporarily retain a precarious foothold on the decline which slopes away into entire negation, but it is impossible to prevent

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Goblet D'Alviella, *L'Évolution Religieuse*; Priestley; Channing; Fisher, *Christian Doctrine*.



the tendency to descend when once the connecting links in the system of thought are broken. It cannot be too plainly stated that the Resurrection is not an isolated incident, but an integral portion of a vast universal system. It belongs to one of the great theories of human life. It is part of a complete and consistent doctrine of God and man, of life and death, of good and evil, of the physical and the moral, of the natural and the spiritual. To reject it therefore is to reject not one solitary event but an entire interpretation of the life of man. Harnack virtually endorses this when he says that 'the question generally as to whether Jesus has risen can have no existence for any one who looks at it apart from the contents and worth of the Person of Jesus.'<sup>1</sup> The Resurrection is inseparably bound up with the dogmatic inquiry, Who is it that rose, and what does His rising mean? what is His work and its reference to God and humanity at large? And the more deeply the relation between the fact and its significance is realised, the more prepared will man become to pause with increased solemnity in presence of a problem so far-reaching and so profound.

3. And finally, the significance of the Resurrection is part of the evidence for the fact. Of course the fact is one thing and theory another. It is one thing to show what an incident would mean if it were historic,

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. Dogm.* i. 85 n.

and another to show that it has actually taken place. Nevertheless, an asserted fact presents a very different claim on rational acceptance, according as it appears as a comparatively meaningless occurrence, or as filled with deepest intellectual significance. If the Resurrection seems no more to a man than an incident external to the essence of Christianity, it cannot, it ought not to have the same evidential probability and force as if it is seen to be part and parcel of a vast systematic process of human development, reaching back before the creation of mankind, and forward to its ultimate completion. The significance is part of the evidence for the fact. And the Resurrection cannot possibly be understood until seen in its fundamental bearings in the vast plan of Christian truth.

But when seen in the light of its transcendental meaning its probability becomes intensified. For certainly it is not thus that men invent. That belief in the Resurrection was due to the illusions of a hysterical woman, or to the incompetence of simple-minded peasant folk to distinguish their dreams from solid fact, is easily asserted. But that the result of their subjective fancies should be an objective system confessedly among the profoundest products of human thought—this makes too large demands upon credulity. You cannot invent incidents which not only fit into but explain in this astounding way the universal history of man.

Hermann Lotze admits that considerations of this kind are just those most calculated to win belief in occasional interventions of divine power and the incessant workings of God in nature. 'Such a belief could only arise if the ideal significance of miracles in the system of the universe were sufficiently clear and important to cause us to regard them as a turning-point in history, for which the efficient forces of the Resurrection had always been preparing unperceived.'<sup>1</sup> Lotze indeed is unable to realise the momentousness of the principles involved in the Resurrection of Christ. But that the principles enunciated are, if true, sufficiently important to be regarded as a turning-point in history, is surely an under-statement of their profound significance.

'No one can be satisfied with conceptions below the highest which to him are possible: I will not believe that it is given to man to think out a clear and consistent system higher and nobler than the real truth.

'Our highest thoughts are likely to be nearest to reality: they must be stages in the direction of truth, else they could not have come to us and been recognised as highest.'<sup>2</sup>

Such are the terms in which a contemporary leader in Science maintains the supremacy of mind in the

<sup>1</sup> *Microcosmos*, ii. 479.

<sup>2</sup> Oliver Lodge in *Hibbert Journal*, Jan. 1905, Presidential Address.

universe against the dreary materialism of Haeckel. A universe over which mind presides is to him nobler than one in which mind is conspicuous by its absence. He will not believe that it is given to man to think out a clear and consistent system higher and nobler than the real truth. And that is precisely the Christian's claim for the religion of the Incarnation. All other conceptions are below the highest which to him is possible. Therefore he cannot be satisfied with them. The Christian conception contains the highest thoughts of which he has ever heard. They must be the nearest to reality. Otherwise it has entered into the heart of man to conceive something more glorious than that which God has prepared for them that love Him. But that would exalt the mind of man over the mind of God. It is inconceivable. 'I will not believe that it is given to man to think out a clear and consistent system higher and nobler than the real truth.' That is precisely why we believe in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

## CHAPTER XI

### JEWISH CONCEPTION OF IMMORTALITY

THE most singular feature of the Hebrew religion is its comparative reserve, at least in the earlier period, on the doctrine of Immortality. Of course it is not for a moment intended that belief in a Future State is not there, still less that it is denied. It is there again and again, but it exists in germ rather than in completion. It is implied rather than asserted. It 'does not pervade the whole organism of the Old Testament as it pervades that of the New.'<sup>1</sup> Indeed there is an absence from the early books of any formulated doctrine of a Future Life. The subject of Immortality is not explicitly introduced into the Covenant between God and Israel. The attention manifestly is rather fixed on this life than on one beyond. The doctrine of Immortality, it has been said, is 'unsupported by the supreme Mosaic revelation.'<sup>2</sup> This fact does not conform

<sup>1</sup> Max Müller, *Anthropolog. Relig.*, p. 3

<sup>2</sup> Bishop Barry, *Manifold Witness*.

to anticipation. We should probably have expected that the vague traditional beliefs of continued existence which we find outside Israel would here, within the precincts of a definite revelation, assume clearness and distinction. But the facts are the other way. The meagre references to the Future State in the early Hebrew literature stand in very marked contrast with the elaborated eschatology of the Egyptian people, out of which Israel emerged. Moses was certainly not ignorant of Egyptian conceptions of immortality. He was learned in all the wisdom of that land. It was not accident but design if those conceptions are not only not reproduced, but positively ignored in Israel.

Various reasons are given for this remarkable reticence.

1. What seems obvious is that with the Jew, as with most ancient peoples, the value of the nation created a greater impression than the value of the individual. The personal and the individual is a matter of later growth. The community, the body, is that which strikes the attention first; the individual feels himself as a unit in a nation; the social aspect chiefly impresses him; the individual has his worth as he contributes to the general good. Now certainly this is characteristic of the early Hebrew religion. God dealt with Israel primarily as a nation. They were, as a body, the chosen people. Hence the all-

important interest was the nation at large. The individual and his destinies were merged in those of the nation. The strongest hopes of the Jew were patriotic rather than centred upon himself. What he cared for was the nation and its fortunes, rather than his own private successes. The future to which he looked with loving intensity of patriotic zeal was that of Israel rather than of his own individual soul. Hence the interests of the Jew were naturally upon earth. And, like a soldier, he was prepared to die happy provided only that his nation secured its advancement.

2. Now assuredly it is true that this social aspect of human life is most important. It is true that a merely self-regarding view defeats its own ends. Only in social life can the individual achieve his full development. Unlimited individualness is absolutely irreligious. And there is something extremely touching—there always is—in the willingness of the individual to be sacrificed for the good of the community at large. It is a beautiful theory. We certainly do not see too much of it in human history anywhere. All this must be said and more. Yet, when all is said, the social view of human life is only one side of it, after all. There is the individual aspect as well. And however deeply a Jew might be attached to the interests of his nation, the time was bound to come when the question, What



would become of its departed members? must force itself upon his attention. The soldier who rejoices when his nation is victorious cannot forget the companions who fell at his side in struggling to win that victory. And we at any rate should suppose that the Jew must have looked backward sometimes to think of the generations now belonging to the past. The Israel which came out of Egypt was not the Israel which entered the Promised Land. The earlier generation died excluded. They were overthrown in the wilderness. And the patriotic Jew must sometimes pause to inquire what else, if anything, remained for these. Meanwhile personal affection must have had its say. Strong human love could not forget the dead, nor satisfy itself with the nation in the place of the departed. Thus the individual and his value became more and more understood. All this took time—much longer than we might have expected. But the more the personal and individual grew, the more impossible it became to leave his eternal destiny out of sight, or to subordinate that to any consideration whatever. Thus in course of time the problem of the future world forced itself on the Jew's attention. And he could not so absorb himself any longer in the interests of the nation on earth as to fail in due regard to the inquiry, Where are the departed, and how does it fare with them?

3. But further, to do justice to this reserve in the

primitive Hebrew religion on the subject of the Hereafter of the Human Race, we must never forget that their peculiar mission was to point to a deliverance to be effected here. And it may be that the perpetual expectation of the Messiah required their concentrated, undivided attention to the Kingdom of God on earth rather than to the destinies of mankind beyond the veil. It may be that they served the interests of mankind the better by this single and complete witness to the coming of Christ than if their attention had been divided between many momentous themes. After all, the human mind is liable to lose in depth what it gains in extent. If so, this limited view of the future world is a limitation imposed on Israel by their place in history.

## I

But Individual Immortality is involved in the fundamental principles of the Hebrew religion. It is implied in the whole Biblical doctrine of God and man. And before we come to study particular passages on the Future Life, it is most important to see how the elementary truths of the Old Testament imply immortality. Often when no explicit assertion whatever is made on the subject, yet a little reflection shows us that this is the necessary inference. It is involved in the principles.

1. For instance, when it is said that man was made in the Image of God, the very language suggests the thought that the Image was intended to show the permanence of that Eternal Personality of which it is a created counterpart. If men thought it over, the perishableness of the Image of God would appear unthinkable. It may be that this view was not actually taken by early readers of the statement that man was made in God's image. It is only implied in the words. It is not actually said. And to realise the inference may require the passage of centuries. But the truth is there. It is only waiting for the capacity and the insight to draw out into common recognition the fullness of its meaning. The time was bound to come when the Jew would understand that permanence must belong to the individual Image of God.

2. Then, again, Scripture suggests that primitive man was originally designed for immortality. This is implied in the connection asserted to exist between death and sin. The whole force of such language, as 'in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,' involves the opinion that man was created for life.<sup>1</sup> The presence of the Tree of Life in Eden, 'of whose fruit if a man ate he would live for ever,' confirms the sense. True that man is regarded as having been separated from the Tree of Life as a consequence of evil. Still this meant a defeat of God's

<sup>1</sup> Charles, *Eschatology*.

original intention. The natural destiny was life, not death. And the inquiry must suggest itself, Was the divine intention to continue permanently defeated? Certainly a religion which begins its doctrine of man with the view that death is unnatural to him, a deviation from his proper destiny, contains within it the germs of a faith in immortality.

3. There is a third way in which man's immortality is implied in the Old Testament. It lies in the fact that man is brought into relationship with God, into covenant with Him, into fellowship and communion with Him. Now the thought instantly suggests itself, that when the creature is brought into union with the Uncreated, it comes to share His immortality. Personal union with God is surely that which cannot cease. The created person is lifted out of his finiteness and nothingness by his union with the Personality which is uncreated.

Thus along all these three lines—the doctrine of creation in God's Image, the doctrine of the nature of death, the doctrine of personal relationship and union with God—the thought of immortality is hinted, suggested, implied. Doubtless it is implied rather than asserted. It lies beneath, and not upon the surface. It is something to be thought out and inferred rather than understood without an effort. And of course it was always possible that men might fail to draw the inference. From various

causes they might be slow to realise the implications. But the important matter is that the germ was there, ready for development when the proper season came. The Future Life of man was fundamentally involved in the whole Biblical conception of man and his relationship with God.

And it is here that the real distinction lies between the Hebrew religion and other religions which we have already considered. Its doctrine of God is of such a kind that faith in human permanence rises naturally out of it. And the whole teaching of Christianity is built naturally upon it.

## II

But it is one thing to say that immortality is implied in the principles of a religion; it is another thing to say that it was believed as a fact. The existence of a future life was believed, but it was subordinated to other considerations. It was there to some extent, but not as one might have expected; nor can it be said to have been influential.

Our difficulty in dealing with Old Testament language is that we read it habitually in the full light of Christian revelation, and therefore may read into it a larger conviction than was present to the minds of the sacred writers themselves. It is perfectly right, in one sense, that we should do this. The capacity

of Hebrew Scripture to bear the full contents of Christian truth is one of the most remarkable indications of its higher origin. Behind the human writer with his local limitations was the inspiring Spirit of God. The extent to which the Hebrew Psalter expresses the Christian devotion and conviction is simply amazing. But when we want to ascertain the actual belief of the Israelites at a given time, we must take care not to ascribe to them a fullness of knowledge which is ours rather than theirs. There are more senses in Scripture than one. But it does not follow that all its senses were actually present to the human writer's mind. Scripture is constantly quoted in forgetfulness of this. We must not argue that the writer must himself have known all the truths which his utterances appear to us to convey.

This is particularly the case on the question of Old Testament teaching on the Future Life. When we read 'he was gathered to his fathers,' we cannot strictly infer that the writer must have believed these fathers to be still consciously existing. This is a meaning which the words will bear; but it is not a meaning which they necessarily convey. Clearly a man might say the same thing when all he meant was committal of the body to the same common place of burial. Similarly, 'I shall go to him—but he shall not return to me'—might mean resumed companionship in a future state. But it might also mean that

the living must join the dead, and not the dead the living. The emphasis may be on the fact that the dead do not return, and not on the thought of conscious meeting again.

Still, while there are many passages of whose bearing we are not secure, there are many which certainly imply the future life. The statements about Enoch, the aspiration of Balaam, the recall of Samuel from the dead, the ascension of Elijah, all denote recognition of an actually continued existence hereafter.

### III

But if we advance beyond the fact of continued life hereafter to the nature of that existence as the Jewish religion regarded it, we are met with disappointment. The Hebrew conception of the state of the departed was gloomy enough :—

‘ Dost Thou shew wonders among the dead,  
Or shall the dead rise up again, and praise Thee ?  
Shall Thy loving-kindness be shewed in the grave,  
Or Thy faithfulness in destruction ?  
Shall Thy wonders be known in the dark,  
And Thy righteousness in the land where all things are  
forgotten ?’ <sup>1</sup>

‘ For in death no man remembereth Thee,  
And who will give Thee thanks in the pit ?’ <sup>2</sup>

The word translated ‘pit’ here is in the original

<sup>1</sup> Ps. lxxxviii. 10, 11, 12.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. vi. 5.



‘Sheol.’ Sheol is the Hebrew Hades, with very much the same dismal connotations.

And yet it is worth reflecting whether the descriptions of Sheol are not sometimes mere descriptions of the physical phenomena of the grave, without any reference to the condition of the soul beyond it. When Job speaks of going ‘to the land of darkness, and the shadow of death; a land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness,’<sup>1</sup> the language may be suggested by the grave rather than by theories of the future state. And when Isaiah describes the dead as those that ‘dwell in dust,’<sup>2</sup> it is certainly the dry choking dust of the desert and the tombs which suggest the phrase, and in reference to which the phrase would be amply satisfied. Words such as those already quoted—

‘In death no man remembereth Thee,  
And who will give Thee thanks in the pit?’—

are liable to very various interpretations, according to the tendencies of the interpreter. They might mean extinction of consciousness at death, or a shadowy, half-impersonal state beyond, or the thoughts suggested by contemplation of the corpse. The idea of Sheol and that of the grave are easily interchanged; and expressions properly applicable only to the dead and

<sup>1</sup> Job x. 21, 22.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. xxvi. 19.

the grave transferred to the future state. We ourselves can readily adopt the Psalmist's words without any reference to the gloomy condition of the soul. All these considerations suggest caution before we assume that the Hebrew conception of the after state was one of unrelieved and unillumined gloom. Even the splendid vision in which Isaiah describes the reception of the departed King of Babylon in the other world; the sensation created in Hades by the arrival of one formerly so great and now so insignificant; the crowding of the dead to witness so strange a spectacle; the taunting language with which the shadowy souls receive him into their ranks—

‘ Art thou also become weak as we,  
Art thou become like us? ’—

even all this may be little more than the powerful expression of the sense of earthly transitoriness rather than a dogmatic assertion of the weakness and helplessness of the condition after death.<sup>1</sup>

Yet still, when every reserve has been made, the fact remains that the Jewish conception of the after state was almost wholly destitute of anything that could elicit human desire. It was an existence, says Ewald, ‘ without the stir and interest of the earthly life, and without the opportunity of experiencing still the delight of God's goodness.’<sup>2</sup> Even so great a

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xiv.

<sup>2</sup> *Old and New Testament Theology*, p. 374.

saint as Hezekiah can find no higher hope than the melancholy utterance :—

‘ The grave cannot praise Thee,  
 Death cannot celebrate Thee :  
 They that go down into the pit cannot hope for Thy truth.  
 The living, the living, he shall praise Thee,  
 As I do this day.’<sup>1</sup>

It has been truly said that words such as these ‘ prove that the most devout and spiritually-minded Jews looked forward to Sheol as a place which none could escape, and yet which none could enter without a mournful sinking of heart.’<sup>2</sup>

#### IV

We have now to trace the development of belief in the Future Life among the chosen people. We have already seen three things : that immortality was implied in the fundamental principles of the Hebrew faith ; that belief in it existed in a rudimentary state ; that the nature and conditions of the Future Life, as the Jews understood them, were not calculated to awaken interest or increase desire. But the Hebrew conviction remained for a lengthened period vague, uncertain, poor. The Future Life was an occasional ray of light, but not a permanent first principle.

The problem discussed in the Book of Job is the

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xxxviii. 18, 19.

<sup>2</sup> Welldon, *The Hope of Immortality*, p. 100.

sufferings of the good. Why does the righteous suffer? And the problem, always difficult, was rendered harder for the men of that period because they held the theory that moral worth was rewarded by earthly prosperity. The good man was also the prosperous: misfortune visited the ungodly. That was the theory. And if the horizon was limited to the life here on earth, without taking into consideration a life beyond, reason imperatively demanded that the good should be rewarded here. Now, when misfortune fell on Job, his friends could only argue that his calamities proved his guiltiness. And the more he denies it the more they insist, with increasingly pitiless severity, upon the conclusion which their theory involves.

‘Remember I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?’<sup>1</sup> . . .  
 ‘If thou wert pure and upright, surely now He would awake for thee, and make the habitation of the righteous prosperous.’<sup>2</sup>

To these accusations Job has no reply. For, like his friends, he also accepted the theory that earthly misfortune was the nemesis of sin. Yet his conscience acquits him of any special blame. What then can he say? If he justifies God, he falsifies his own conscience: if he justifies himself, he falsifies God. Such is the terrible dilemma in which the righteous sufferer, viewed from the philosophy of that period,

<sup>1</sup> Job iv. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Job viii. 6.

found himself placed. Now obviously the theory that goodness involved prosperity was false to fact. Nor did the suffering of the righteous mean divine displeasure. But suffering as a discipline of the good, and a sign of love, neither Job nor his friends could understand. Nor could Job, as a Christian naturally would, take instant refuge in the thought of immortality. Not that immortality was denied. On the contrary, it was to some extent believed. Only it was not yet a living and stirring conviction. Neither in Job's religion nor in that of his friends was immortality sufficiently powerful to be their obvious natural refuge in perplexity and their consolation in distress.<sup>1</sup> The thought of immortality comes only now and then, occasionally illuminating the darkness, while Job vacillates between hope and fear.<sup>2</sup> In the solemn passage beginning 'Man that is born of a woman,' Job tragically contrasts the stubborn hardihood of the tree and its continued vitality with the total disappearance of man.

‘There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down,  
That it will sprout again,  
And that the tender branch thereof will not cease.  
Though the root thereof wax old in the earth,  
And the stock thereof die in the ground ;  
Yet through the scent of water it will bud,  
And bring forth boughs like a plant.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ewald, *Old and New Testament Theology*, p. 379.

<sup>2</sup> Ch. xiv.

But man dieth, and wasteth away :  
 Yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he ?  
 As the waters fail from the sea,  
 And the flood decayeth and drieth up ;  
 So man lieth down and riseth not :  
 Till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake,  
 Nor be raised out of their sleep.'

Then a sudden inspiration seizes him—the Hope that there might be an Hereafter and a solution of the enigmas of life within it.

'O that Thou wouldest hide me in the grave,  
 That Thou wouldest keep me secret, until Thy wrath be  
 past,  
 That Thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember  
 me.  
 If a man die, shall he live again ?  
 All the days of my appointed time will I wait,  
 Till my change come.  
 Thou shalt call, and I will answer Thee :  
 Thou wilt have a desire to the work of Thine hands.'

Here Job has reached a higher thought. The gloomy fact that man has never been seen to rise again is brightened by the fact that the Almighty can, if He will, recall him into life. Job pictures himself as hidden in the other world. He will be stationed like a sentry on duty there, waiting for the summons which releases him. Job eagerly grasps the hope. It is a glorious possibility. He would thankfully wait—no matter how long. 'All the days of my appointed time would I wait till my change come.' If only in that other world he might hear God call

him, how joyfully would he respond, and find at last in God his perfect blessedness ! But this hope is but a passing ray. The vision of these high possibilities rapidly fades and produces no permanent effect on the sufferer's mind.<sup>1</sup>

Yet again, at a later time in the poem, Job returns to the same idea, and far more forcibly. He is growing desperate—stung with the pitiless injustice of his friends, and their accusations so logical even to himself and yet so false, he utters the piteous words—<sup>2</sup>

‘ Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends :  
For the hand of God hath touched me.  
Why do you persecute me as God,  
And are not satisfied with my flesh ?’

Then he seems to gather up all his strength as one about to concentrate his deepest convictions into a single utterance—

‘ Oh that my words were now written !  
Oh that they were printed in a book !  
That they were graven with an iron pen  
And lead in the rock for ever !’

He desires with all his soul that the utterance he is about to make should be recorded, and recorded in the most permanent way. He would have it cut with iron in the rock and the letters filled in with lead, so that generations may read it, and it may share the rock's imperishableness.

Then comes the great passage inseparably associated

<sup>1</sup> Ewald, p. 379.

<sup>2</sup> Job xix.



by us with the most solemn hours of our lives and the committal to the dust. It is doubtless a difficult and much-disputed passage. Let us then take the version of one who will not be accused of orthodox predilections. Renan renders as follows—

‘For I know that my avenger liveth :  
He will appear at the last upon earth.  
When this my skin shall have fallen in strips,  
Deprived of my flesh I shall then see God.’<sup>1</sup>

Here Job rises to a height which he has not reached before. He gives splendid utterance to a great conviction. He takes refuge in God, Who will vindicate him some day. After he is dead he will yet see God, and God will justify His servant.

From that lofty height it is true Job descends. The splendid hope does not do as much for him as the Christian’s certainty. How could it? That is not to be expected. But the intensity of Job’s passion and bitterness dies down from that hour. His words become more calm and more serene, until at last he humbles himself into the dust before the All-Wise One.

But we may not forget that the majestic poem closes, not with the admission of Job into future blessedness, but with his restoration to earthly prosperity. The last scene reveals his relatives and friends raising a fund to improve his circumstances—‘every

<sup>1</sup> Job xix.

man gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.' He comes to have enormous possessions. He is blessed with a numerous and attractive family. He sees several generations, and dies in a good old age.

It is difficult not to feel that Revelation is progressive; and that the sacred writer of that glorious book was not yet in the light revealed in the Face of Jesus Christ.

But the conviction of Immortality grew. And, significantly enough, it grew by personal devotion. The more men felt the union between themselves and God, the more instinctively they grew to understand that this union could not be temporal, or abruptly terminated at the grave. As the worshipper became consciously linked with God's everlastingness, he gained brilliant if transitory glimpses of his own personal immortality.

This is particularly true of that wonderful book which is the devotional manual of Christendom no less than of Israel, the Psalms. Here in its deepest passages the sense of intimate union with God is seen to lift the Singer above his own mortality, and produces the conviction that he will share God's everlastingness. When he exclaims—

'The Lord Himself is the portion of mine inheritance.

Thou shalt maintain my lot. . . .

I have set God always before me :

For He is on my right hand, therefore I shall not fall'—

the calm sense of security and permanence pervades his soul. 'The heart that expands with such blessed consciousness of possessing God can chant its triumphant song even in front of the grave. So in his closing strain the Psalmist pours out his rapturous faith that his fellowship with God abolishes death.'<sup>1</sup>

'Wherefore my heart was glad, and my glory rejoiced :  
My flesh also shall rest in hope.  
For why? Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell :  
Neither shalt Thou suffer Thy holy one to see corruption.  
Thou shalt shew me the path of life ;  
In Thy presence is the fulness of joy :  
And at Thy right hand there is pleasure for evermore.'<sup>2</sup>

Certainly no observation seems more just than this—that any interpretation which eliminates immortality from these last lines lands us in a disastrous anticlimax, ruinous alike to the logical inference and to the spiritual intuitions of the whole psalm.<sup>3</sup> What was the level of popular contemporary belief in the Psalmist's day is another question. Whether he himself dwelt permanently on this high level, or only in occasional rapturous moments of exceptional insight, we cannot tell. Whether it is true, as a recent critic says, that the Psalmist 'had a faith, but not a very definite faith, in a future life,'<sup>4</sup> still it is involved in

<sup>1</sup> Maclaren on the Psalms.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. xvi. 10-12.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Maclaren, p. 147.

<sup>4</sup> Cheyne in *Expositor*, 3rd series, vol. x. p. 223, 1889.

the necessities of the Psalmist's thought that he does here give expression to a radiant certainty.

In the Seventy-third Psalm the hopes of the human heart reach a still serener height. The Singer begins on the earthly level. He confesses that his mind was perplexed by the social injustices of life. He has gone far beyond the theory of Job. He is perfectly well aware that goodness is by no means always rewarded with earthly success. 'I was grieved at the wicked. I do also see the ungodly in such prosperity.'<sup>1</sup> Insolent irreligion succeeds. And the Singer's heart recoils before the facts. The unscrupulous men get on in life :—

'Lo, these are the ungodly,  
These prosper in the world,  
And these have riches in possession.'<sup>2</sup>

And the injustice of their prosperity tempts the Singer to infidelity.

'I said—Then have I cleansed my heart in vain,  
And washed mine hands in innocency.'

But the one thing which holds him back from infidelity to God is the thought that such language would also be infidelity to the best of human beings.

'Yea, and I had almost said even as they,  
But lo, then, I should have condemned the generation of Thy children.'<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm lxxiii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* 12.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* 14.

He stands then staggered by the problem of social injustice, and there seems no solution.

‘Then thought I to understand this,  
But it was too hard for me.’<sup>1</sup>

The Singer then takes refuge in the surest region for obtaining light and peace—in devotion. He goes into the sanctuary of God; and in communion with God, as a more religious temper comes upon him, he sees things in another light. It dawns upon him that all this earthly prosperity is, after all, a transitory thing, and has not the precious value which he in his envious mood had ascribed to it. He had seen things in deplorably wrong perspective. His challenge of the justice of God, his temptation to infidelity, were narrow and blind; proceeding on mistaken estimates of the real worth of things. Thus he humbles himself before the Almighty. ‘So foolish was I and ignorant, even as it were a beast before Thee.’ But if earthly success is not the reward of righteousness and the goal of human endeavour, what is? What is the highest good, the true riches, the best possession? The Singer’s answer is—God. While the prosperous but godless men suddenly perish and come to a fearful end, because, having lost their prosperity, they have lost their all, the devout man has what cannot be lost, that is God.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ps. lxxiii. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* 22-25.

In contrast therefore with the transient nature of all things earthly, the Singer feels that his own permanence is assured through the fact of his union with God. He is lifted out of perishableness into duration. He comes to share with God the attribute of immortality. So close is his union with the Almighty that he himself must abide.

## V

A still further stage in the hopes of Israel is reached when we find the clearly enunciated conviction of Resurrection. This is achieved by Isaiah. One bold utterance is—

‘He will swallow up death in victory ;  
And the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces.’<sup>1</sup>

But more remarkable still is the chapter in which, in the midst of release from enemies and safety in their own land, the thought of the prophet dwells upon the absent and the dead who fell in battle.

‘They are dead, they shall not live,  
They are deceased, they shall not rise ;  
Thou hast visited and destroyed them,  
And made all their memory to perish.’<sup>2</sup>

And the Singer feels that no material achievement can restore the lost individuals. Recovery of the dead, restoration of the lost, would be alone worth

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xxv. 8.    <sup>2</sup> Isa. xxvi. 14. See G. Adam Smith, *Commentary*.

calling by the name of salvation. The graves do not give up their dead. Depression and mourning for the departed cloud the day of victory. Death is the real victor, after all. 'We have wrought no deliverance in the earth,' he exclaims.

Then comes the splendid outburst of a living conviction which penetrates beyond all facts of experience to the Resurrection of the dead.

'Thy dead men shall live,  
Together with my dead body shall they arise.  
Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust :  
For thy dew is as the dew of herbs,  
And the earth shall cast out the dead !'<sup>1</sup>

Upon this great utterance of Isaiah a further advance is made in the passage where Daniel describes the moral distinctions to take effect in the Resurrection :—

'And many that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake,  
Some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.  
And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament ;  
And they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.'<sup>2</sup>

Here for the first time the double Resurrection of the dead, the division between good and bad, makes its appearance in Israel.<sup>3</sup> The moral issues of the

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xxvi. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel xii. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Pfeiderer, *Philosophy of Religion*, iii. p. 158.



Resurrection are here unmistakably distinct and clear.<sup>1</sup>

To complete the history of the doctrine among the Jews it would be necessary to collect the teaching of the Apocrypha. We are told that Judas Maccabæus sent to Jerusalem a sin-offering in behalf of the men who fell in battle, and that he did it 'in that he was mindful of the Resurrection, for if he had not hoped that they that were slain should have risen again, it had been superfluous and vain to pray for the dead.'<sup>2</sup>

## VI

1. When we reach the time of Christ, not only does the doctrine of immortality form part of Israel's explicit faith, but also the more distinctive doctrine of Resurrection of the body has become very widely accepted. All the Pharisaic party were completely identified with belief in Resurrection. It was also the prevalent popular faith. Their belief in immortality was inseparable from belief in Resurrection. To deny the Resurrection was, to their minds, denial of immortality. Martha knows that her brother shall rise again in the general Resurrection at the Last Day.

2. One very natural result of the gradual evolution of the doctrine of immortality in the Hebrew religion

<sup>1</sup> Salmond, *Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, p. 266.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Macc. xii. 44.

from an implicit germ to a formulated faith was that, while in the time of Christ 'the Resurrection was a fixed article of the popular belief,' yet some rejected it.<sup>1</sup> The doctrine of the Sadducees was that the soul dies with the body.<sup>2</sup> And the Sadducee was able to make more effective opposition just because the Resurrection of the dead was absent from the earlier sacred writings.<sup>3</sup> And it is worthy of careful notice that our Lord, in refuting them, did not appeal to explicit statements or to the more definite teachings of the later books.<sup>4</sup> He might have quoted Isaiah or the great passage in Daniel. But instead of this He showed that immortality was implied in the foundations of the Hebrew faith, in the doctrine of union with God. 'Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For He is not a God of the dead, but of the living : for all live unto Him.'<sup>5</sup> Union with God cannot be conceived as temporal. It cannot terminate. He that has God has already eternal life as his possession. The God of Abraham is the everlasting Being with whom Abraham stood during his earthly career related. But the permanence of the object of Abraham's worship implies the permanence of

<sup>1</sup> Pfleiderer, *Philosophy of Religion*, iv. p. 152.

<sup>2</sup> Josephus, *Antiq.* xviii. 1-4.

<sup>3</sup> Hausrath, *New Testament Times ; Times of Jesus*, i. p. 146.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Perowne.

<sup>5</sup> S. Luke xx. 37.

Abraham who offers that worship. From His union with God he derives immortality. It is a relationship which can never be ended. God cannot be one Who once stood related to personalities no longer existing. All live unto Him. Immortality is the fundamental implication of personal union with God. It is inconceivable that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob should be dead in the sense of non-existent. They still continue to live in virtue of the immortality of Him with whom they were by religion united.

By this profound conception our Lord appeals to the deepest instincts of the religious nature. Immortality is inferred from the Sadducee's accepted faith. If he follows out his belief in God to its logical conclusion, it is this in which he will inevitably find himself involved. It may indeed be that the Sadducee failed to realise the inference even when indicated to him. But if so, he is not the only human being who has failed to realise the implications of his own accepted principles.

And indeed it is one of those great and splendid inferences which could neither be drawn nor appreciated except by a certain spirituality of mind. No doubt in this case, as in others, the wisdom of God would be justified by those who were really His children, but receptiveness in a very marked degree was necessary at that stage of religious development before the Sadducees could acquiesce in our Saviour's

teaching. But what a revelation it must have been to the mind competent to apprehend that immortality was involved in their very doctrine of God !

## VII

It may be well to close our study of Old Testament teachings on the hopes of the human race with the doctrine of the modern Jew. A Jewish writer, entrusted with the subject 'Immortality of the Soul' in their great Encyclopædia,<sup>1</sup> expresses his opinion that 'the belief that the soul continues its existence after the dissolution of the body is a matter of philosophical or theological speculation rather than of simple faith, and is accordingly nowhere expressly taught in Holy Scripture.' Yet he recognises that the Pharisaic belief in resurrection overcame the negations of the Sadducees, and that 'the prevailing rabbinical conception is that of resurrection, not that of pure immortality.' 'Resurrection,' he tells us, 'became the dogma of Judaism, fixed in the Mishna and in the Liturgy.' Over a lengthy period this prevailed. However, in process of time it would seem that the influence of the Sadducee reappeared. Belief in resurrection yielded to the theory of the immortality of the soul. The exclusive assertion of the latter is described as the distinctive merit of Moses Mendelssohn. 'Thenceforth Judaism, and especially progressive or

<sup>1</sup> *Jewish Encyclopædia* : Article, 'Immortality of the Soul.'

Reform-Judaism, emphasised the doctrine of immortality in both its religious instruction and its liturgy, while the dogma of resurrection was gradually discarded, and in the Reform rituals eliminated from the prayer-book.' Immortality of the soul instead of resurrection was now found to be an integral part of the Jewish Creed, and the logical sequel to the idea of God. Thus, according to this writer the tendency of later Judaism has been to disown and eliminate the idea of resurrection.

Another modern Jewish authority—Friedländer—after quoting from Maimonides that a main principle of the Jewish religion is 'the belief in the revival of the dead or the immortality of the soul,'<sup>1</sup> adds as his personal conviction, 'I firmly believe that there will take place a revival of the dead at a time which will please the Creator.'<sup>2</sup> But beyond this statement the writer expresses himself with cautious reserve and uncertainty. 'But how this will be done in reference to our own selves, whether we shall enjoy the same life, whether our future life will be an improved edition of the present one, whether all will be restored to life, or whether the new life after death will be enjoyed by the soul alone, or by body and soul jointly: these and similar questions transcend the bounds of human knowledge. We know nothing but the bare fact that God can restore to life

<sup>1</sup> Friedländer, *The Jewish Religion*, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 164.

that which is dead, and that a resurrection will take place.'

A third exponent of modern Jewish thought, while asserting that 'the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is an integral part of the Jewish creed,'<sup>1</sup> has nothing to say in favour of resurrection. But immortality 'follows as the logical sequel' to the idea of God. Moreover, God has written the expectation deep in the human heart, and 'He may be trusted to fulfil the promise' which He has written there. We have a 'presentiment of immortality,' 'an invincible instinct.'<sup>2</sup> The writer maintains that this presentiment is universal; that it is part of man's very nature to think of his soul as imperishable. The inadequateness of the present life constitutes the clearest promise of another. The writer does recognise that 'eternal life is the promise of the Hebrew Scripture';<sup>3</sup> that it is the logical sequel to the idea of God. And yet his account appears to us meagre and inadequate in the extreme. He seems to us to have failed, like the Sadducee of old, to draw out fully the spiritual inferences which the first principles of the Jewish religion involve. The splendid intuitions of the Psalms, the momentary but magnificent glimpses of immortality gained by the seers of old, might not suffice to enlighten to any large extent the subsequent

<sup>1</sup> Morris Joseph, *Judaism as Creed and Life*, p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 92.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 93.

generation ; for these intuitions, these glimpses, were after all personal and intransmissible possessions. But it might have been fairly anticipated that generations of devout reflection in Israel would have drawn forth much more forcibly the grand inference from their union with God which our Lord taught the Sadducee almost two thousand years ago. So far as our knowledge of modern Israel goes, the conception of immortality among them does not exhibit the strength or intensity or universality that might have been hoped ; there is considerable diversity in the different schools, and the conception of resurrection seems almost entirely to have vanished away.



## CHAPTER XII

### THE INFLUENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION ON THE HOPE OF IMMORTALITY

#### I

1. The first fact which confronts us is that Christianity has made the future life a certainty. This the Hebrew religion failed to do. Immortality formed no part of the Mosaic revelation. True that the belief grew with the people's growth, and strengthened with its progressive development. But it was accompanied with grave uncertainty. There were strange misgivings. The thinkers of Israel rose to it now and then as a glorious aspiration; the Psalmist, in his hours of devotion, felt himself a sharer in the permanence of the God to Whom he prayed: yet there are many utterances of a profoundly sceptical tone in the Old Testament such as could never conceivably have come from the pen of an Apostle or Evangelist. There was also the Sadducee, with his denial of the hopes of the human

race.<sup>1</sup> And that denial had its plausibility, because immortality was 'imperfectly supported by Scripture warrant.' The Sadducee could truly say that the future life was not explicitly proclaimed in the Mosaic revelation. He could claim to be faithful to the original Hebrew faith while denying this doctrine altogether. Now such a position is in Christianity inconceivable. No man could claim that life hereafter was left in the Christian revelation undecided. The doubts at Corinth about the resurrection of the dead only manifested an imperfect grasp of Christian principle. The Sadducee or his equivalent has never found a reasonable foothold within the precincts of the Catholic Church. It would not be for him a congenial, or indeed a possible atmosphere. He would breathe more freely outside. For in Christendom all the old uncertainty has disappeared. Christianity 'has translated a guess, a dream, a longing, a probability, into a certainty.'<sup>2</sup> It is characteristic of the Old Testament that it describes the exclusion of man from the neighbourhood of the Tree of Life. It is equally characteristic of the New Testament that it concludes with the readmission of humanity to the Tree of Life.<sup>3</sup>

2. But Christianity has done more than give

<sup>1</sup> Bernard in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, v. 'Resurrection.'

<sup>2</sup> Salmond, *Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, p. 584.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. xxii. 2.

certainty to the future state; it has illumined that state with a glory unimaginable in the pre-Christian world. In S. John's conception of the bright hereafter the whole realm vibrates with songs of triumph.<sup>1</sup> He could hear the glad thanksgivings of innumerable multitudes to the Lamb that was slain:<sup>2</sup> 'Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests.'<sup>3</sup> He heard the grand hymn of the redeemed creation: 'Blessing and honour and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.'<sup>4</sup> And then the wonderful passage: 'And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall

<sup>1</sup> Rev. iv. 8, 11.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. v. 9, 13.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* 9, 10.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.* 12.

lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.'<sup>1</sup>

There we have the gladness of the future state described in vision. If we would also see how it affected life, we may contrast Hezekiah with S. Paul. While the former clung to earth because the real life was here, S. Paul's reality of life is just where Hezekiah saw nothing but cold and shadow. 'For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. . . . I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.'<sup>2</sup> And the Apostle's writings close with the triumphant words, 'For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.'<sup>3</sup>

3. The fact is that Christianity has created, wherever it extends, a profound belief that human nature will continue hereafter in its completeness—that is to say, body and soul. Many ancient thinkers were unable to realise the unity of human nature. They regarded a man as an unreconciled dualism of soul and matter.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. vii. 13-17.

<sup>2</sup> Philippians i. 21, 23.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Timothy iv. 6, 7, 8.

Accordingly, if they believed in his permanence at all, it was the permanence of one portion of human nature only. But Christianity regards human nature as a unity. It taught the continuance hereafter of human nature in its full completeness. It not only taught that doctrine, but made that doctrine prevail as it had never prevailed before. It is an astounding fact, when we reflect on it, that Christianity went to the Greek people, who scoffed at such a theory, and taught them the resurrection of the body, and persuaded them to believe it.

4. Contrast, again, the Apostolic consolation to the mourner with anything in pre-Christian times:—

• But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with

these words.<sup>1</sup> So wrote S. Paul. And men did comfort one another with these words. To see how deeply the Christian conception brought comfort to men we may contrast the epitaphs of pagan and early Christian times :—

‘The first point which strikes us,’ says Dr. Northcote, ‘in studying any collection of pagan epitaphs is the dreary prospect, or rather the utter want of prospect, of anything beyond the grave, which seems to be their chief characteristic.’<sup>2</sup> They speak of the body being dissolved into the dust and the life into the air. They ring the changes on the thought of a long last eternal farewell.<sup>3</sup> A favourite phrase is the pathetic utterance, ‘Thou hast been.’ It is a matter of the past. Such appears constantly as ‘the popular belief, whatever hopes of a brighter kind may have dawned upon the minds of a few select philosophers.’ Some express themselves in terms of cynical worldliness and unbelief. ‘Once I was not, now I am not. I know nothing about it, it does not concern me.’<sup>4</sup> Many among them give utterance to expressions of strong human affection; but what is significantly wanting is the language of hope.<sup>5</sup> A widower complains that the only wrong thing his wife ever did was that she died.<sup>6</sup> Another says she will always be alive to him. All the natural affections, says the writer,

<sup>1</sup> 1 Thess. iv. 13-18.

<sup>2</sup> *Epitaphs of the Catacombs*, p. 59.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 60.

<sup>4</sup> p. 63.

<sup>5</sup> p. 64.

<sup>6</sup> p. 70.

are pleasingly displayed on the pagan monuments of ancient Rome. 'They are only dumb, or give utterance to painful and discordant sounds, so far as any supernatural hope is concerned.'<sup>1</sup> If they venture to look beyond the grave all is dark and dreary.

Another writer, speaking of the reliefs and inscriptions on Athenian tombs, says :—

'Their whole aspect is turned, so to speak, from the future to the past, and from heaven to earth. We whose ancestors have been for some twelve hundred years taught constantly that death is but the entrance to wider life, that the world is a place of probation and preparation for eternity, can scarcely place ourselves in thought in the position of men who seem to have found the world charming and delightful and to have been well satisfied with it, preferring to let their minds dwell on the enjoyments of the past rather than on a future which, at best, was a cold and gloomy echo of the present world. It is not that they disbelieved in the unseen world, or thought that the soul died with the body; such scepticism was perhaps rarer in antiquity than in modern times, and confined in antiquity, as in modern times, to a few of the highly educated. But that inevitable future occupied comparatively very little of their time and thought; it was a cold shadow to be kept out of sunny life as much as might be. And when it was

<sup>1</sup> *Epitaphs of the Catacombs*, p. 72.



thought of, it was thought of without very much either of hope or fear.’<sup>1</sup>

The thought of immortality in the pagan world awakened no desire and inspired no hope of happiness. ‘The best and wisest of the ancient Greeks, with the possible exception of a few philosophers such as Socrates, if it had been open to them to choose or refuse the gift of immortality, would have refused it. That immortality could be the satisfaction of human desires, or the compensation for human sufferings, or the reward of human virtues, was an idea that did not occur to them, and would not have been intelligible to their minds. Immortality did not appear to them as a joyful hope, but as a bad dream, or a painful necessity, or at the best a tolerable fate.’<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, the writers of the early Christian epitaphs ‘imply, even when they do not actually express, a firm belief in the reality of the future life; they pray for the dead as though they were still living, and capable of feeling joy and sorrow; or they call upon them for assistance as though they were still able to give it; and often the very language in which they speak of death and all that concerns it bears within it an unconscious testimony to faith in a future resurrection.’<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Professor P. Gardner, *New Chapters in Greek History*, p. 320.

<sup>2</sup> Welldon, *Hope of Immortality*, p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> Northcote, *Epitaphs of the Catacombs*, pp. 73-74. For fuller information see the great collection by Muratori, *Novus Thesaurus Veterum Inscriptionum*, 1740, vol. ii. p. 1125. A brief and very

No doubt among the thousands of Christian epitaphs there are some which approximate to the pagan rather than to the Christian type. If this happens more particularly in the fourth and fifth centuries, surely the reason is not far to seek. The incursion of the world into the Church, when once Christianity became permitted, recognised and popular, involved the entrance of many minds only partially awakened to Christian ideas. Nevertheless we find such thoughts among the records of the dead as these: 'Mayest thou live among the saints!' 'Mayest thou live in God.'<sup>1</sup> We find prayers that the departed may be refreshed with the holy souls. The dead are described as having been received to God, fetched by angels. 'Sweetest son, mayest thou live in the Holy Spirit.'<sup>2</sup> 'May thy spirit rest well in God.' 'Pray for thy sister.' 'Mayest thou live in the Lord Jesus.' 'May God refresh thy spirit.' 'Peace to thy soul.'<sup>3</sup> 'Thou livest in the glory of God, and in the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ.'<sup>4</sup> 'The flesh of Julia lies here, but her soul, renewed by the Spirit of Christ, and having received an angelical body, has been taken up into the heavenly kingdom of Christ with the saints.'<sup>5</sup>

readable account will be found in Le Blant's *Manuel d'Épigraphie Chrétienne*, 1869.

<sup>1</sup> *Epitaphs of the Catacombs*, p. 75.    <sup>2</sup> p. 81.    <sup>3</sup> p. 83.    <sup>4</sup> p. 89.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 101. Angelical body is here doubtless equivalent to spiritual body in S. Paul.

The contrast between pagan and Christian at the grave has been recently summarised as follows :—

‘The prevailing character of the pagan epitaph is hopelessness, but of the Christian it is hope. The one may contain beautiful expressions of personal and family and parental affection, it may be cynical or flippant, it may express resignation or a sense of wrong; it rarely expresses hope. But hope is the most prominent characteristic of the Christian epitaph.’<sup>1</sup>

## II

These, then, are the simple facts. Christianity has revolutionised our conception of the future life. The characteristic features of the contribution of Christianity to the hopes of the human race are four: the certainty of the future life; the superiority of the future life; the completeness of the future life; and consequently the most powerful consolation to the bereaved.

But the further question is, How has Christianity produced this change? What is the cause? What is there in Christianity to account for this marvellous transfiguration in the conception of man's ultimate destiny? Now it cannot be too clearly stated that, whatever Christianity has done for the hope of immortality, it has done it in virtue of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The change has not been wrought

<sup>1</sup> Headlam in Hogarth's *Authority and Archaeology*, pp. 414-415.

through the teaching given by our Lord on the future life apart from the fact of His resurrection. The future life did indeed hold a prominent place among the subjects of His instructions. He warned men to 'fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell,'<sup>1</sup> when the future existence of soul and body alike is definitely asserted. He taught that 'the hour is coming in the which all that are in the grave shall hear His voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.'<sup>2</sup> He promised the dying malefactor, 'To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.' He had already declared, as He stood by a human grave, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life.'

But neither these instructions, nor claims, nor promises, could possibly by themselves have wrought the immense effect on human hope which Christianity has produced, if it had not been for the fact that He actually Himself rose again from the dead. Indeed, without this, His teaching would have been signally refuted. It is the fact of the resurrection of Christ which has wrought this mighty change in human conceptions of immortality. Not of course that the fact alone could have produced all this. It is due to

<sup>1</sup> S. Matthew x. 28.

<sup>2</sup> S. John v. 28, 29.

the fact and to its meaning : to the fact and what the fact involves. It is due to the historical Jesus understood to be the dogmatic Christ. The Christian certainty of a future life is not created by the knowledge of the mere fact that a human individual rose from the grave. It is created by realising Who that Individual was : by the whole dogmatic significance of the fact of His resurrection. Men understood that Jesus Christ was a divine Person, Who took to Himself the common elements of human nature, thereby identifying Himself with all the human race ; men saw that He, that divine Person, bore that human nature through all sinless human experiences, through redemptive sufferings, through the deepest humiliations, through death and beyond it, into regions of perfection where human nature had never stood before, transfigured, completed, glorified in soul and body ; men realised that He lifted up that human nature in its now completed state and set it at God's right hand on high. And it was all this—the dogmatic significance of the resurrection of Christ, and not the bare fact without the meaning—no, nor yet the meaning without the fact—which wrought these mighty changes in human conviction about the future life.

That this is the real cause and explanation of the facts is clearly shown by the teaching of the leading Apostles. When S. John thinks of his Master it is now as 'the first-begotten of the dead.' When he

sees Him in the vision His utterance is this : ‘ I am He that liveth and was dead : And behold ! I am alive for evermore, Amen ; and have the keys of Hell and of Death.’<sup>1</sup> It is the resurrection of Christ which has filled the disciple’s mind with thoughts of life for evermore and dominion over death. It is that resurrection which has illumined the great Hereafter and made it to S. John so bright and glorious that he could hear the joyful songs of the redeemed and describe the peace of heaven. With S. Peter it is just the same. The first message of the Gospel ever preached in the Church was a sermon on the resurrection of Christ.<sup>2</sup> ‘ This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted,’<sup>3</sup> He was powerfully working upon the earth. And consequently S. Peter’s conviction that this resurrection of Christ means the resurrection of mankind is gloriously expressed in the opening words of his first letter : ‘ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you.’<sup>4</sup> The same holds good of S. Paul. He says that our Saviour, Jesus Christ, ‘ hath abolished

<sup>1</sup> Revelation i. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Acts ii. 24.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 32, 33.

<sup>4</sup> 1 S. Peter i. 3, 4.

death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.' <sup>1</sup> And that it is the resurrection of Christ which he refers to as the abolition of death and the manifestation of immortality, he makes indisputably plain when he says elsewhere: 'If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.' <sup>2</sup> It is 'if we believe that Jesus rose again,' that we have a ground for the certainty that the Christian will also rise. S. Paul bases his assurance of immortality on the resurrection of Christ. And to such an extent is his hope for the human race founded on Christ's resurrection that he utters the memorable statement which is to some inexplicable: 'If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, your faith is also vain. As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.' <sup>3</sup>

### III

There are modern teachers of immortality who ignore the resurrection of Jesus Christ, or at any rate base nothing upon it for the hopes of mankind. But neither they nor their arguments are so independent of His resurrection as is sometimes imagined. For their arguments are at any rate the product of minds trained in Christian environment. They themselves are the outcome of Christian antecedents. They

<sup>1</sup> 2 Timothy i. 10.    <sup>2</sup> 1 Thessalonians iv. 14.    <sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. xv.



appeal to men also trained in similar Christian associations. They are often quite unconsciously, but no less really, influenced immensely by the views of human nature which Christianity has introduced, by principles which have their ultimate basis and justification in Christ's resurrection. It is often a self-evident thing that these arguments could not have been produced apart from Christian development. It is inconceivable, it is impossible, that the writers should have elaborated them on the presupposition of Indian speculation. Christianity has made them possible.

It has often been a subject of wonder in modern thought that Christianity should rest the hopes of the human race so greatly on the concrete instance of Christ's resurrection, rather than on the general inference of the heart and of the reason. But still, as a matter of history, this concrete, particular resurrection has brought about a belief which the inference of universal reason failed to produce. Mankind has manifested a profound capacity for being influenced by concrete instances rather than by abstract speculations. It seems difficult to deny that our Lord's own argument for the continued existence of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of the dead in general, on the ground of the immortality of Him with whom they were spiritually united, has been less understood down the centuries, and far less influential in deepening the hopes of the human race, than the particular fact that

He Himself rose again the third day from the dead. It is of small value to indicate by what means we should prefer the deepest convictions of humanity to have been developed. The fact remains that faith in immortality has been created and intensified by the concrete resurrection of Christ as it has been by nothing else in the world. Of course, not by that resurrection, apart from the Personality in that resurrection, and from all that the divine Personality involved. It has been the fact together with its significance. Still it has been the fact rather than abstract considerations. Reason and heart, apart from Christ's resurrection, have faltered and often failed. Where they have proved inconclusive or ineffective, the triumphant morning in Joseph's garden has determined the conviction and hopes of millions. Once more, let it be repeated that it is belief in the literal physical resurrection which has immensely strengthened and confirmed men's hope in immortality. It was not in the least that as men looked on Jesus' grave their instincts told them that such human goodness had only been transplanted and must flourish elsewhere. It was not a mere faith that the good cannot really die. It was literally the reappearance in human form of Him Who was dead and is alive again which wrought this mighty advancement in the hopes of the human race. Harnack himself admits that 'it is not by any speculative ideas of philo-

sophy . . . that mankind, so far as it believes in these things, has attained to that certainty of eternal life for which it was meant and which it simply discerns.’<sup>1</sup> ‘Again,’ he adds significantly, ‘of every attempt to demonstrate the certainty of immortality by logical processes, we may say in the words of the poet : “ Believe and venture : as for pledges, the gods give none.” ’

And so it is to-day, and so it must continue to be. Our own conviction of immortality really derives its strength from our acknowledgment of the Incarnation and what that involves. It is because we are persuaded that a Person literally divine has already immortalised our human nature in the precincts of light that we are also persuaded of our own immortality. To say that the resurrection of Christ has wrought this vast effect is not to undervalue the arguments of reason and the instincts of the heart : it is merely to recognise the facts of history. Let the inferences of heart and mind do their utmost and their best. But while the Christian and the man who is not a Christian both alike possess all these, the Christian also possesses beyond these yet stronger grounds for belief which in the nature of the case the other cannot have. As a matter of history, it is to the Incarnation that the world has owed its strongest hold upon, and its loftiest conceptions of, a life to

<sup>1</sup> *What is Christianity?* p. 163.

come. Nor can men ever outgrow the need of that basis to their faith. The lessons of history seem plain. Wherever faith in the Incarnation is not held, there is a tendency for the Sadducee to reappear. And this is scarcely strange. For the strongest grounds for future hope have with the Incarnation vanished away. So true it is, as the Apostle said, that our Saviour Christ has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.

## APPENDIX I

### PRESUPPOSITIONS

It is becoming increasingly clear to modern thought that the appreciation of external evidence depends on internal conditions. The minds of individual men are not mere mechanisms for reception and registration of external impressions, but each possesses its own distinctive individuality. The mental furniture of principles, assumptions, and experiences, to say nothing of capabilities, will considerably modify each man's attitude towards objects approaching him from without. Accordingly it becomes of primary importance to make a study in presuppositions. We are compelled to remember the existence of theories, whether metaphysical, scientific, or religious, which preoccupy the mental vision, and tend to determine the interpretation which the individual will place upon the evidence presented to him. We all know how essential it is in controversy to get beneath the subject discussed and the arguments suggested, down to the fundamental principles and assumptions which often unconsciously, and for that very reason all the more effectively, are the real determinators of the respective superstructures over which the men contend. They differ in their view of a given incident because they differ in the assumptions with which they view it. Hence often the uselessness of dispute; at any rate unless it goes down sufficiently deep to manifest the fundamental divergences of principle. But when that fundamental divergence is understood, then it becomes clear that everything depends on which of the conflicting principles is the true. Given the conflicting principle,

each mind feels logically required to place that construction on the evidence which he actually places upon it. Consequently the question becomes transferred from the rival interpretations of the evidence to the conflicting theories which produced that rivalry. 'The doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity,' says Romanes, 'seemed to me most absurd in my agnostic days. But now, as a pure agnostic, I see in them no rational difficulty at all.'<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Lacordaire, when looking back and endeavouring to analyse the causes of his own conversion, could see nothing beyond the Christian evidences which had always been familiar to him, but which had failed to impress themselves aright so long as he was surrounded by the atmosphere of sceptical presuppositions which he breathed in at the University. While his interest in the evidences was purely speculative, they were insufficient; but when he meditated reverently upon them, not confusing his mind with every theory and objection under the sun, but allowing these particular considerations to assert themselves and sink deep into him, he realised their significance and felt their conclusiveness. Let us apply this general principle to the subject of our Lord's Resurrection.

## I

In the first place, there are certain presuppositions of the intellect which must, of necessity, greatly affect, if they do not determine a man's attitude towards the evidences of the Resurrection.

1. Contrast, for example, the receptiveness of the Jew and the Greek in the Apostolic age. To the Hebrew mind no theoretical difficulties on the possibility of physical resurrection barred the way to belief. The generality already held the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead among their accepted principles. Thus their intellectual presuppositions were favourable to belief. To exclaim among them, 'of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question,'<sup>2</sup> was instantly to secure a massive sympathy and approval. But to the mind of the Greek, on the

<sup>1</sup> Romanes, *Thoughts on Religion*, p. 175.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xxiii. 6.

contrary, the same doctrine presented the gravest difficulties, because contrary to his presuppositions. The very mention of such a subject at Athens provoked contempt and ridicule.<sup>1</sup> The pagan, preoccupied by a theory of the permanence at best of spirit and the degradation of matter, was impervious to evidences which demanded revision and reversal of inherited principles. Thus his presuppositions disposed him to reject exactly what the presuppositions of the Hebrew prepared him to receive—the same evidence having contrary effects, not from its inconclusiveness, but from the respective mental condition of the recipients.

This contrast of influence is impressively exhibited when S. Paul stood before Festus and Agrippa, representatives of the two opposing theories.<sup>2</sup> The appeal, 'Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?' was, on the principles which the Hebrew king accepted, simply unanswerable. But the argument from omnipotence would scarcely affect the standpoint of the pagan magistrate. He evidently endured the Apostle's defence with some impatience, while he did the prisoner the justice of listening to assertions which his Roman presuppositions already rejected as absurd.<sup>3</sup> But when it came to the statement that Christ should be the first to rise from the dead, his suspicions were confirmed that he was listening to the wanderings of an unhinged reason. Accordingly, he interrupted with a half-pitying, half-contemptuous sentence: 'Paul, thou art beside thyself: much learning doth make thee mad.'<sup>4</sup> The fairy tales of the pagan mythology might indeed exhibit some parallel assertions, but for a man in sober earnest to talk of a dead man rising again to life conclusively demonstrated that the speaker must be out of his mind.<sup>5</sup>

But the silence of Agrippa and the scorn of Festus are lessons in the influence of presuppositions.

2. This influence of presuppositions is obviously everywhere. In a volume written some thirty years ago to disprove the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the writer observes that 'meta-

<sup>1</sup> Acts xvii. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xxvi. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Acts xxvi. 23.

<sup>4</sup> Acts xxvi. 24.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Rackham on Acts, p. 320.



physical principles play their part in moulding our view of facts.' He reminds us that we are to learn 'how impossible it is to examine an alleged phenomenon apart from metaphysical presuppositions.' And he expresses his conviction that a man's estimate of the evidence of the Resurrection of Christ will vary with his theory of the universe. The assertion that belief in the Resurrection was due to supernatural antecedents is, he tells us, 'an assertion coherent with one view of the universe,' while the assertion, that this belief was due to natural antecedents only, is 'coherent with another view of the universe.' Accordingly it appears that 'the Resurrection remains in question until we have settled what view of the universe we adopt.' In fact, 'two sets of doctrines lie before us: if the one set is true, Jesus rose from the dead; if it is not true, or if the other set is true, He did not rise from the dead.' With this statement of the case we may cordially agree. This frank recognition that the Resurrection of Christ is no question of an isolated fact, but entails a theory of the universe, is of profound significance. Our attitude towards the Resurrection depends on our intellectual presuppositions. If one theory of the universe be conceded, then Jesus rose from the dead. If another, then He did not rise. Everything therefore will depend on the correctness of a man's presuppositions.

3. Thus, on the one hand, there are presuppositions favourable to belief in the Resurrection. A man may approach the subject with the antecedent conviction that there is a personal God; and that presupposition will greatly affect his estimate of the Resurrection evidence. Given personality of boundless power as a presupposition, and it would be irrational to meet the evidences of the Resurrection with an *a priori* denial of its possibility. Thus the presupposition is so far favourable to belief. More still does this presupposition tend in the same direction if the relation of God to the world be understood, not in the old deist sense of remoteness and externality, but in the deeper sense of immanence.

4. Conversely there are presuppositions unfavourable to belief. Uncertainty on the existence of a personal God would create antecedent presumption against the probability of

Resurrection. The tendency of the mind would be either to reject the evidence or to explain it away. Of course it may be said that even from an agnostic standpoint Resurrection might occur. For it is increasingly felt that a truly scientific mind will refrain from imposing *a priori* limits on the capabilities of natural force. Accordingly it must be admitted that, for anything the mind can say to the contrary, nature might possess the power to raise the dead. And, if such an event were certified beyond dispute, more especially if it became a matter of regular recurrence, it would, we are told, have to be tabulated among the other phenomena of nature. That is all. We seem, then, to reach this singular result: that even if men found themselves after death restored and reunited with human love under nobler and permanent conditions, yet even then the change might be ascribed to merely natural forces, so long as the Almighty declined to submit His existence to a logical demonstration. But all this only means that a naturalistic theory of the universe disables the critic from ever recognising the possibility of any other than a naturalistic construction of the evidence. Obviously, therefore, it is some *a priori* theory of the universe which determines their attitude towards the evidence. It is in fact difficult to read the negative criticism of the evidences for the Resurrection without seeing that the whole attitude is constantly determined by presuppositions unfavourable to the Christian theory of the relation between God and man and the world. Harnack's rejection of the Resurrection of Christ is very much the outcome of Unitarian presuppositions. He is governed by a theory of the person and work of Christ which is not that of Christendom. If the essence of Christianity were the proclamation of the Fatherhood of God by the loveliest of human personalities, it may be at once conceded that there is no necessity for Resurrection. Accordingly, Harnack rejects it as a needless accretion born of undisciplined admiration. But that is the outcome of his presuppositions.

Meyer, criticising some rationalistic theories of the Conversion of St. Paul, frankly says that their negative position is simply the outcome of *a priori* opinions. Speaking of two well-known critics he says, since one of them proceeds from the

postulates of pantheistic and another from those of theistic rationalism, since both agree in starting from the negation of a miracle, the consequence is that 'they cannot present the Conversion of Saul otherwise than under the notion of an immanent process of his individual mental life.'<sup>1</sup> That is to say that the interpretation of the facts of the New Testament will depend very greatly on a person's presuppositions. Such is the influence of presuppositions, whether favourable or unfavourable to faith.

5. Such being the influence of presuppositions, whether favourable or unfavourable to faith, it might be imagined a thing desirable to approach the subject without any presuppositions whatever. But it should be understood that this is quite impossible. As the ablest modern thought assures us, the attitude of an individual towards a fact depends on his mental furniture and experience;<sup>2</sup> it is impossible to approach the contemplation or study of anything with a perfectly empty mind; a man without presuppositions is as much an abstraction, a psychological monster, as a man without a character; and consequently the correct interpretation of phenomena will be governed by the antecedent inquiry whether a man's presuppositions are false or true.

There must always be an inner correspondence with the outer evidence, if the outer is to be understood.<sup>3</sup> This is manifestly the case with all works in which intellect finds expression. The thoughtful writer will be understood by us only if we are thoughtful men. All moral and intellectual greatness can only find a fit response in the love and sympathy of kindred souls. Deep answers unto deep. If the Resurrection of Christ be a divine act, it will be appreciated and understood precisely in proportion as the faculties have been cultivated in that direction; that is to say, by the aid of certain presuppositions and prepossessions. It must be seen within the precincts of the Christian faith, and not from outside of it.

<sup>1</sup> In Acts ix.

<sup>2</sup> Moberly, Preface to *Ministerial Priesthood*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Illingworth, *Reason and Revelation*. See also Dr. Lock's inaugural lecture on presuppositions of the study of the New Testament, in *The Bible and Christian Life*, p. 71 ff.

## II

So far we have considered the place of the intellect in accepting the evidences of religion. We have now to consider the place of the affections.

There is an important passage in Moberly's *Problems and Principles*, in which he reminds us that evidences cannot be presented to abstract intellect as if the intellect could be isolated from the person who is its proprietor. We may by mental analysis separate our spiritual nature into sections such as intellect, emotions, will.<sup>1</sup> And for analytical purposes this is well. But we can no more separate them in actual life from the person of whom they are but aspects, than we can separate in the flame the quality of burning from the quality of giving light. His intelligence is the intelligence of a person. And as the intelligence is the total man's power of perceiving, assimilating and knowing, it cannot be independent of what the total man really is.<sup>2</sup> Hence it is that the moral perception also has its share in the decision. We concede to mathematics a line without breadth, says Vinet; but can we admit the existence of a self without characteristics? Does such a self exist anywhere outside the thoughts and reveries of philosophers? This concrete self is inseparable from the accessions which its own life has brought to it. It exists with its interests, its passions, its habits, its prejudices; in a word, with all that moral character which may easily compromise the impartiality of its inquiries and the value of its conclusions.<sup>3</sup>

That much depends upon the affections as well as upon the intellect in matters of religious evidence is manifest when it is remembered that the Resurrection of Christ is a response to some of the deepest human needs. It answers to the human desire of immortality. Now, as a brilliant writer has

<sup>1</sup> Moberly, *Problems and Principles*, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Vinet, *De la spontanéité de l'esprit humain*, pp. 6-7; *Essais de la philosophie morale*.

reminded us, the desire of immortality varies in individuals greatly.<sup>1</sup> It is quite possible not to be deeply affected by the instincts and cravings to which the Resurrection is the divine reply. For the present possession of life may be, for the time, so full and satisfying as to leave but little sense of transitoriness or further need. It is possible to be so completely enclosed within the limits of the senses as not to feel any want of immortality. Now in such a case as this the evidence of the Resurrection may readily find us insensible to its appeals. There is no craving to which it can correspond. There is no probability about the evidence as viewed by earthbound listlessness. For it is a certain principle that, as Mozley says, 'we never in fact believe anything upon external evidences only.' There must be congeniality between the evidence and ourselves. 'Nothing can engraft itself upon us which is alien to us.' 'There must be a congeniality between ourselves and it before we can incorporate it by belief.'<sup>2</sup> Deep must answer unto deep: the deep of the divine response to the deep of the human need. But without that wistfulness, that yearning, the evidence and the individual do not correspond. Affection is the instrument by which we embrace the hope of immortality; to be deficient in affection is to be destitute of the qualifications for recognising and responding to its appeal.

Professor James in his essay on *The Will to Believe*, confirms the truth of this.<sup>3</sup> He assures us that 'as a rule we disbelieve all facts and theories for which we have no use.' If a man has no use for the conception of immortality, he will dismiss the evidence, because it does not appeal to him.

When it is said that the evidences for the Resurrection cannot be appreciated without a desire for immortality, the objection may be urged that this desire may encourage belief which the evidence does not justify. Would not this be compelling the reason to abdicate in favour of the affections, and surrendering everything to the decision of our wishes? Our desire for immortality is obviously no guarantee for the fact of immortality. Do we not see instances in life sufficiently numerous in

<sup>1</sup> Mozley, *Lectures*, p. 3 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> *The Will to Believe*, p. 10.

which the wish was father to the thought, in which men believe because they want to believe?

In answer to this objection, Mozley admits that the affections may act this way and over-influence the reasoning power. That is undoubtedly the danger of the affections. And yet, what is the remedy? Certainly not to leave the affections out of the inquiry. To be without personal longing on the subject of immortality is to be without the stimulus indispensable for mental criticism about it. 'The intellect,' says Scudamore,<sup>1</sup> 'has no internal energy derived and centering in itself to support it in the painful accumulation of knowledge, and carry it through the laborious investigation of disputed truths. Its powers of application and endurance are borrowed from the will.' But the will is influenced by the affections. Unless we yearn for the truth of a thing, we are destitute of the stimulus for mental exertion about it. This is clearly seen in the phenomena of attention. The concentration of the mental faculties on a subject is dependent on the will and on the affections. Indifference to immortality is not calculated to produce that concentration of mind and fixity of attention upon the theme which is nevertheless indispensable if justice is to be done to the evidence of the Resurrection. Is it not at least worth while to consider whether failure in the evidence to produce conviction may be sometimes due to failure in the individual to concentrate his mind with the earnestness required? Speaking of the simplest objects which present themselves to our sensation, Lotze says 'we observe the worth of these simplest objects only when we throw ourselves with concentrated attention into their content.'<sup>2</sup> Professor James says, 'If you want an absolute duffer in an investigation, you must after all take the man who has no interest whatever in its results; he is the warranted incapable, the positive fool.'<sup>3</sup> Not only so. While it is true that the wish to believe is not without attendant risks and dangers, it is also true that the wish very often places a restraint upon belief. More particularly is this the case where practical and personal interests rather than merely speculative inquiries are concerned. If I

<sup>1</sup> Scudamore, *Office of the Intellect in Religion*, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> *Microcosm*, i. p. 243.

<sup>3</sup> James, *The Will to Believe*, p. 21.



hear that a serious collision has happened to the train which conveyed my greatest friend, I do not readily believe what I fervently wish, that he has emerged from the disaster safe and sound. 'If I am very anxious,' says Wilfrid Ward, 'that a thing should be true, I find that I am slower and not quicker in believing it.'<sup>1</sup> We all know the significance of the saying that a thing is too good to be true. Those who would pursue this train of thought should read Wilfrid Ward's essay, *The Wish to Believe*. We can all appreciate the sentence which he quotes from Arnold's *History of Rome* when describing the attitude of the city toward the news of a critical victory: 'They dared not lightly believe what they so much wished to be true.' 'Christianity is addressed,' says Newman, 'both as regards its evidences and its contents, to minds which are in the normal condition of human nature. . . . It speaks to us one by one, and it is received by us one by one, as the counterpart, so to say, of ourselves, and is real as we are real. Christianity is the counterpart of ourselves! That is to say, of our real selves. It is the objective response to our subjective needs. It is real to us in proportion as we are real. It demands preparedness in the recipient, an inward correspondence partly intellectual, partly moral, without which its evidences and its contents will be misunderstood, wrongly estimated.'<sup>2</sup>

To these words of Dr. Newman may be appended the present Bishop of Oxford's comment upon them. 'It is real to us as we ourselves are real: in proportion as we meet it in the wholeness of our nature, sincere and simple, and natural and whole-hearted and unabashed in the confession of our needs, our ignorance, our weakness, our hopes and fears, so will it bear into our hearts the manifold conviction of its reality; at point after point we shall own its insight into our hearts, its sympathy with our life, its power to give us health and strength. But every instinct or faculty withheld, bewildered or distorted, invalidates so far our power of recognition and acceptance, or, at the least, delays our discovery of some harmony, some witness

<sup>1</sup> W. Ward, *The Wish to Believe*, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, p. 484.



of kindred as it were, which should have bound us closer than ever to the truth thus better known. And surely any man who begins to think that Christianity means less to him than once it did, would do well to inquire very carefully which of the two consilient forces in the act of faith is really failing: whether the weight of external evidence for the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ has been certainly and seriously impaired; or whether, on the other hand, any elements, instincts, powers, senses, in his own inner being presumed and addressed by Christianity, have faded into listlessness or swerved aside to some unworthy aim, or been bewildered and neglected in the speed and stress of life.<sup>1</sup>

‘There are elements in the evidence,’ says Moberly, ‘which are not patient at all of a strictly logical or mathematical statement; which words cannot fully express, though they may indicate, but indicate only to the moral perceptions of those who have a moral apprehension. For, indeed, merely external facts, though given with photographic exactness, can never be evidence apart from the intelligent insight which gives interpretation to them. That interpretative power which makes them relevant and gives them meaning—the unifying, vivifying creativeness of intelligence—flashes out upon them from within, from the personal apprehension which takes cognisance of them. And therefore, in a case like this, the part of the evidence that could be made intelligible to an intellect wholly non-moral would be but an insignificant fraction of the whole.’<sup>2</sup>

The author adds that this does not mean that religious facts are to be apprehended by something else than intelligence. Only it must be a spiritually experienced and alert intelligence.<sup>3</sup>

‘It is not only that it is worse than useless to bring in the shrewdness of the counting-house or of the laboratory, in order to gauge aright the character of regeneration or of penitence, or to measure the possibilities of sacramental grace: such a question as that of the presentment in the Gospels of the story of the Incarnate Life—even that of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, which may seem, above all, to be a

<sup>1</sup> Paget, *Faculties and Difficulties*, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Moberly, *Problems and Principles*, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 19.

question of the barest historical fact—is none the less mixed in character.

‘In the full appreciation of the evidences there are elements involved deeper than the merely historical ones; considerations which go to the root of our spiritual consciousness. It is vain to protest against them. They are there. The evidence which omits them, however conscientiously marshalled, will still be but part of the whole.’<sup>1</sup>

‘It is no bare fact, the fact of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. It cannot be separated from what it means and is. It is full of meanings; meanings which interpret and illuminate, and receive again illumining interpretation from every deeper craving and experience of man. All history led to it, culminated in it, is explained by it; all history, not the outward history only of kingdoms and peoples, but the inner record of man—man’s failure and need, man’s progress, aspiration, possibility, man’s self-sacrifice, sanctification, blessedness—hinge and depend on it. There are points in its total evidence which can be more truly apprehended by an old woman practising self-denial for love’s sake, or a penitent tender from his first humiliating confession, than by the most consummate mathematician, or metaphysician, or logician, in the world. Something in this direction perhaps all would allow. My point is that the difference between them is not merely one of moral or spiritual excellence—that the penitent or the old woman excels, not merely in deserving, but in capacity (in a certain direction) for rational apprehension; the difference is in the intelligence as well as in the character. The intelligence of a rational animal, the . . . moral consciousness, the . . . spiritual personality, though one in name, are in content and quality not identical.’<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Moberly, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 21.

## APPENDIX II

THE RELATION BETWEEN RELIGION AND  
HISTORY

THE doctrine of the Resurrection of Christ is one of the central points in which religion blends with history. But there is a strong desire in modern thought to separate religion from historic facts. This desire is based upon the view that religion would be much more unassailable if founded on reason than if dependent on history. Hence an attempt is made to sever the Christian religion from the historic Resurrection of Christ.

The chief of these attempts have been made in Germany, and the acknowledged representative of these critical endeavours is undoubtedly Professor Harnack of Berlin. In his lectures on the *Essence of Christianity*, delivered to some six hundred students in the University of Berlin, he has dealt with the special subject of the Resurrection, and has attempted to separate Christianity from one of its main historical foundations. The influence of these opinions in England is clear, and it becomes necessary for Churchmen to consider what the character of an historical religion really is, and the possibility of such a separation as Harnack would propose, and the consequences to Christianity which flow from the attempt.

## I

Harnack makes a distinction between the Easter message and the Easter faith.<sup>1</sup> By 'the Easter message' he means the announcement about the empty grave and the appearance of Jesus; by the 'Easter faith' he means the belief that the Crucified One had really triumphed and lived elsewhere; was, in fact, in the life eternal. And on the basis of this distinction, which he asserts to be scriptural, he

<sup>1</sup> See *What is Christianity?* p. 160.

argues that 'although the greatest value is attached to that message, we are to hold the Easter faith even in its absence.' This, according to Harnack, is the intention of the Scripture. He says that 'the story of Thomas is told for the exclusive purpose of impressing upon us that we must hold the Easter faith, even without the Easter message.' He raises the question whether S. Paul knew the message about the empty grave; and, while he thinks it probable, yet declares that we cannot be quite certain.<sup>1</sup> But, according to Harnack, what is certain is that the all-important matter to S. Paul and the Apostles was not the state in which the grave was found, but Christ's appearances. Then applying the distinction to modern life and to ourselves, Harnack denies that it is possible for us to base our Easter faith upon the fragmentary Evangelical narratives. We must hold the faith without the message. Accordingly, he views the Easter message of the empty grave as purely symbolical of the great truth that Jesus is immortal. 'This grave was the birthplace of the indestructible belief that death is vanquished, and that there is a life eternal.' It must have been, he thinks, even to the disciples themselves, not so much the Easter message as the moral personality of Jesus which was the ultimate foundation of their Easter faith that He was still living elsewhere as the firstfruits of them that slept.<sup>2</sup>

A very able and independent critic has subjected Harnack's distinction between the Easter message and the Easter faith to a searching scrutiny. Loisy admits that the distinction is real, but denies that it is Evangelical. It cannot be found in the Gospels. He admits, further, that the Easter message (that is to say, the discovery of the empty tomb, and the appearances of Jesus to the disciples) does not amount to an indisputable argument, and cannot convey absolute certainty. And this from the very nature of the case. For the reported Resurrection of Jesus is not His return to life under ordinary physical conditions. The empty grave is also capable of more than one explanation. It cannot, therefore, be viewed as decisive evidence. The appearances themselves, although deeply significant, do not necessarily compel belief in their objective reality. The

<sup>1</sup> *What is Christianity?* p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 163.

appearing and disappearing, after the manner of spirits and not after a physical sort, places the incidents in a category which is supernatural. Is it not inevitable that natural proofs of supernatural facts should be inadequate and inconclusive? As to Harnack's distinction between the Easter message and the Easter faith, the critic allows that the Apostles' faith was not the same thing as their message. Their faith included a personal and living adhesion to Christ. But, however valid this distinction, the Apostles' faith that Jesus lives and has conquered, was not, as Harnack thinks, independent of the Easter message that He was risen. Quite the contrary. However men may strive to detach belief in immortality from the message of resurrection, what is certain is that the faith of the Apostles was created by the appearances. They had no conception of immortality apart from bodily resurrection. Not even S. Paul himself held such a view. Thus for the Apostles the Easter message and the Easter faith have the same object and the same significance. Accordingly, when Harnack states that 'the story of Thomas is told for the exclusive purpose of impressing upon us that we must hold the Easter faith even without the Easter message,' his critic replies that the Easter faith which we are here bidden to hold is precisely that which is proclaimed in the Easter message; that is to say, we are here bidden to hold the Easter faith that He was actually risen from the dead, even without the Easter message announcing it. What Harnack means here by the Easter faith is belief in the immortality of Jesus. But certainly Thomas never doubted that. What he doubted was his Master's Resurrection. What he was reproved for not believing in the absence of tangible evidence was, not the immortality of Jesus, but His Resurrection. That is substantially the answer of Loisy<sup>1</sup> to the theory of Harnack. And the importance of the answer lies in the fact that it is a sincere endeavour to refute the theory from Harnack's own point of view, by arguments which, as a historical critic, Harnack himself could not well disallow. It may be perfectly true that the answer of Loisy is not founded on the full principles of Catholic truth. But that is due to the exigencies of the task before him,

<sup>1</sup> *L'Évangile et l'Église.*

namely, to answer a critic on grounds which the critic would accept. In this task Loisy has surely succeeded. Whatever there may be among his utterances elsewhere which we have reason to deplore, at any rate here he has done invaluable work, for which a believer must be grateful, and which ought to do great service in indicating the weakness of the critical antagonism to the historic Faith.

Viewed from the standpoint of the Catholic Religion, the fatal defect of Harnack's distinction lies in its complete failure to realise the true significance of Christ's Resurrection for Christian thought. The Easter message, the announcement that Christ was risen, is represented by this great writer as no better than a temporary scaffolding by which the Easter faith, that Christ was triumphant, was erected. It gave a momentary support to Galilæans in discouragement—a support which even they could only half require, and which modern opinion can not only do without, but is even greatly relieved to be no longer burdened with. This is Harnack's strange conception. He has no higher view of the Resurrection of Christ than as a useful illusion promoting better things. The entire dogmatic significance of the Resurrection is as completely ignored as if it did not exist. The Resurrection is represented as if it had no intrinsic value whatever, as if it were a mere burden from which modern thought desires to be relieved.

## II

The distinction between the Easter message and the Easter faith is really part of the larger question, What is the general relationship between religion and historical facts? Harnack discusses this in another work, his lecture on 'Christianity and History.' The Church 'associates things eternal with an historical fact,' and 'maintains the indissoluble unity of both'; but as a critic he desires to know whether that is defensible. Is it possible to select 'a single phenomenon and saddle it with the whole weight of eternity'? especially when the phenomenon belongs to the remoteness of the past. The maxim of Lessing,



that 'historical truth which is accidental in its character can never become the proof of the truths of reason which are necessary,' owed its influence to an obsolete philosophy. The eighteenth century could confidently assume that natural religion, as that generation possessed it, contained all things needful, and could therefore ignore the accidents of history as elements from which religion had nothing to learn. But this view of the contents of natural religion as fixed and unalterable is an illusion which the nineteenth century has dispelled, it being now clearly understood that all religion, natural religion therefore included, is a growth, a development, a process within the sphere of human history. Lessing's antithesis, therefore, between truths of reason and facts of history, is unreal. The truths of reason are themselves facts of history; and natural religion itself has passed through the process of historic evolution. But, says Harnack, the old objection to the relation between Christianity and History is now being reproduced in another form. It is now asserted that 'the facts of history can never be known with a certainty that would entitle us to make them the foundation of our religious belief.' This Harnack admits so far as the details of history are concerned. To him the Resurrection of Christ is in the region of uncertainty. What, then, remains after historic criticism has swept the field? The answer given is that what remains certain is the great fact of Christ's personality. The main lineaments of the personality of Christ have not been altered by any criticism. The impression made by that personality on the first Christian community, on S. Paul in particular, is 'a simple matter of fact which no historical criticism can in any way alter.' S. Paul reflects the light received from that unique personality. Nothing can be more certain. 'By the side of that, what can any historical detail signify?' Here, then, according to Harnack, religion has escaped into a region where criticism has no power. Details are gone, but religion cannot be based upon them. 'Testimonies, documents, assertions, when all is said, what do they amount to?' But while criticism has devoured the details, 'the spiritual purport of a whole life, of a personality,



is also an historical fact, it has its reality in the effect which it produces.' And this personality criticism cannot assail.<sup>1</sup>

Such is Harnack's endeavour to find a solid residuum under the shifting sands of detailed historic incident. It amounts to this—the impression made by the personality of Christ upon S. Paul in particular is 'a simple matter of fact which no historical criticism can in any way alter.' Now let us consider that residuum.

1. The question is, What was the impression produced upon S. Paul by the personality of Christ? Manifestly, apart from any details, it was an impression of moral perfection and actual divinity. The personality which S. Paul reflects is the Dogmatic Christ, a Christ who has a very awful and absolutely unique relationship towards him and claim upon him, a Christ towards Whom he can express a reverence indistinguishable from the adoration due to godhead alone.

2. But the Christ of criticism is assuredly not this. Apart from all details, the impression which the personality of Christ produces on the critic is not one of divinity at all; at the best it is no more than remarkable human excellence. This can be readily exemplified in Harnack himself. The impression made upon him by that Personality, after it has been subjected to critical treatment, is that of a perfectly sublime instructor on the Fatherhood of God, and nothing more. He speaks indeed of 'our reverence for the divinity which was revealed in radiance in a son of Abraham amid the wreck and refuse of a narrow world' (p. 58); but by 'divinity revealed' no more is meant than reflected goodness in a human person, a son of Abraham and not the everlasting Son of God. By no solitary statement does he justify the hope that he believes in the personal equality of Jesus Christ with the Father Whom He proclaimed. Indeed he expressly says that 'to represent the Gospel as an ethical message is no depreciation of its value' (p. 70). He lays down the startling assertion that Jesus desired no other belief in His Person than obedience to His commandments (p. 125). To his mind the title Son of God denotes

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Harnack's *Lecture on Christianity and History*.

nothing beyond reflection of God's character in human moral excellence; or the practical consequences of a knowledge of God as His Father such apparently as is possible for every human being. Yet he does indeed admit that 'Jesus is convinced that He knows God in a way in which no one ever knew Him before' (p. 128), and puts into the words '*My* God and *My* Father' something which belongs to no one but Himself. What that something is, and how He came to think it, Harnack calls 'His secret, and no psychology,' he says, 'will ever fathom it.' Here the impression made by that Personality would surely seem to suggest, imply, or demand an inference which nevertheless the critic declines to draw. Harnack acknowledges still further that the address to the Father, 'Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world,' 'is undoubtedly the direct reflection of the certainty with which Jesus Himself spoke' (p. 129). But there the gifted critic imposes an arbitrary limit on our inquiry. 'Here all research must stop.' As if the bewildered intellect and startled conscience could possibly refuse to entertain the awful alternatives to which such language drives us. Here all research must stop! No. That is precisely what we must not do. We must allow that Personality to leave its full impression upon us. And when that is done, what remains but the conclusion of St. Paul?

Meanwhile, painful as it is, truth demands the complaint that this grand but shadowy Figure of moral excellence and lovely teaching, somewhere on the border-line between the human and divine, whatever it may be, is assuredly not the Christ according to S. Paul. Harnack, indeed, has claimed that the main lineaments of the personality of Christ have not been altered by any criticism. But, alas, this meagre Christ is not the Christ of the Pauline letters! For the impression produced by that Personality upon S. Paul is an impression of divinity, while the Christ of criticism is nothing more than the humanitarian Jesus.

As we study Harnack's methods and conclusions, it becomes increasingly clear that the defect lies not in the historical criticism, but rather in the presuppositions and theories, derived elsewhere, which modify his estimate of the separate incidents,

and disable him from allowing that Supreme Personality to make its true impression upon him. He approaches Christ with a mind already determined invincibly against the social conception of the Personality of God. God is for him *solus et solitarius*. Accordingly, when the impression which Christ makes upon him borders dangerously near the Trinitarian doctrine of God, the critic suddenly refuses all further consideration. 'Here all research must stop.' But this refusal is not historical criticism, it is a *a priori* theory. It only means that the critic is a disciple in a particular metaphysical school. Harnack allows the validity of all historical evidence which harmonises with a Unitarian theory of God, but he refuses to allow evidence which favours the Catholic conception to exercise any real weight. But it is difficult not to feel that if another critic, with Agnostic instead of Unitarian convictions, approached the same historic evidence, he would still further limit the impression which he would allow this Personality to produce upon him. Certainly the Agnostic critic could not speak of 'divinity revealed in radiance in this son of Abraham,' for he believes that no divinity exists. Thus the impression made by Christ will vary endlessly, not through historic criticism after all, but through the critic's subjective convictions.

### III

The modern offer to disentangle religion from history in the interests of stability does certainly sound an attractive proposal. Its attractiveness is due to the assumption that a religion of reason would possess a security and a universality unattainable by a religion dependent on the facts of history. It must, of course, be frankly admitted that disadvantages attach to local incidents, and that if Christianity is essentially an historical religion, it must be liable to those disadvantages. And it is easy to contrast a religion labouring under the difficulties of historic detail and documents with a religion resting on nothing but the firm foundation of incontrovertible reason. Yet contrasts such as these are much more picturesque than

veracious; for if religion founded on history has its difficulties and limitations, the same thing is also true of religion derived from reason. If there is one thing which reason during the last century has proved to its own satisfaction, it is its incapacity to demonstrate even the very existence of God. The main arguments for this basis of all religion have been subjected to the solvents of the critical understanding, with the result that each in turn has been pronounced to be inconclusive. God, it is said, refuses to be put at the end of a syllogism. Belief in God is not a demonstration of reason, but a venture of faith. The power of reason is much more limited than men supposed. And all faith is a result of the entire personality rather than the exclusive exercise of one amongst its faculties. Thus the contrast frequently drawn between religion derived from history, and religion derived from reason, is discovered after all to be not, as sometimes represented, a contrast between insecurity and security. The religion of reason has its own uncertainties as well as the other. This is important to remember. The offer to disentangle Christianity from what are called the uncertainties of history, and to place it in a secure refuge within the province of reason, where the critics cease from troubling, is much more plausible than true. It assumes the certainty of reason, and the assumption is incorrect. If criticism has its doubts in the province of history, has it none in the province of reason? If the Resurrection can be challenged, has no challenge met the doctrine of the existence or the character of God? Moreover, the fact is that man's belief in God—that is in the ultimate principle of all religion—is much more derived from history than it is from reason. We owe religion in the first instance to our historic circumstances. We are all recipients of the particular conceptions of God prevalent where we happen to be born. Millions and millions of Jews have believed what they believed through faith in the visions and the utterances of one solitary man. All religion is derived from tradition first, even if it be confirmed by reason afterwards. Thus for any man to depreciate religion based on history is a suicidal policy. The most elementary religious beliefs have attained their form by the process of a long historic development, in

which Authority and Tradition, Example and Association, have all contributed their quota to the last result.

If it be permissible in such a subject to illustrate from the pages of Romance—a field largely occupied of recent years in the problems of religion—it is worth recalling how in *Robert Elsmere* the historical element of religion is depreciated as insecure; the truths of reason are represented as a realm of invincible certainty and peace; the narrations of the Gospels are declared to have been so disintegrated by the critical process that comparatively little solid fact remains; the Resurrection is relegated to the region of childish imagination; and thus, the ground being cleared of historic religion, we are invited to see life lived and death confronted on the basis of the religion of reason. But the striking feature is that the surrender of belief in Christ's historic Resurrection, and the sole reliance on the inferences of reason, so far from proving conducive to firm triumphant faith, is described as having in the critical period precisely the reverse effect. Robert Elsmere says to his wife as he lies dying, 'Leave me in God's hands'; and yet, the author says, 'he did not talk much of immortality, of reunion. It was like a scrupulous child that dares not take for granted more than its father has allowed it to know. At the same time it was plain to those about him that the only realities to him in a world of shadows were God, love, the soul. One day he suddenly caught Catherine's hands, drew her face to him and studied it with his glowing and hollow eyes, as though he would draw it into his soul. "He made it," he said hoarsely as he let her go, "this love, this yearning. And in life He only makes us yearn that He may satisfy. He cannot lead us to the end and disappoint the craving He Himself set in us. No, no; could you, could I, do it? And He, the source of love, of justice. . ."' So he tries to argue himself into belief. Yet later again: 'We no sooner attempt to define what we mean by a personal God than we lose ourselves in a labyrinth of language and logic.' The religion of reason, then, does not after all give men much certainty. Now this very incapacity of the reason suggests that, after all, there may be revealed the truth through that very process, which is to-day not infrequently disparaged—through the facts of

history. For it seems certain that if any adequate revelation of God is possible, it can only be through personality, and that must be in the province of history. And if that be so, we are brought back again to the questions of incidents and historical facts ; and the possibility of the Resurrection reappears. For we can place no *a priori* limits to the ways of divine self-revelation. Even if the religion derived from reason possessed a certainty impossible to religion based on facts of history, yet still may there not be truths which only personality can reveal, which must be received through history if they are to reach mankind at all ? Is it possible to ignore the fact that for millions belief in their own immortality has been due, not to the inferences of their reason so much as to the Easter message of the Resurrection of Christ from the dead ? Can we contemplate this fact without admitting that at least it has been part of the providential education by which mankind has been confirmed in its highest hopes ? Are we sure that mankind no longer needs that strengthening, that the severance of religion from history might not mean a return to the uncertainties of the ages before Christ came ? After all, let the critic pause. What if this Easter message should be true, and its beneficent operation on human hopes a merciful provision of God for men who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage ? Is it inconceivable that it should be so ? If not, let the critic pause and consider yet again.

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## APPENDIX III

### THE BAPTISMAL FORMULA

As an instance of the power inherent in the authoritative sayings of the great forty days, we may consider somewhat in detail the creative utterance to which we owe the institution of Christian Baptism. The order was given, ‘ baptizing them in



the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.' And the phrase has laid its controlling influence upon all the Christian centuries. Recent criticism indeed has questioned whether the language can belong to the period assigned to it, on the ground that early Christian Baptism, as recorded in the Acts, appears to have been conferred merely in the Name of Jesus Christ—a practice difficult to account for if our Lord had in person expressly defined the formula to be employed in its administration. But the validity of this criticism depends on the assumption that the formula of Baptism actually adopted by the Apostles was merely in the Name of Jesus Christ. This is more than open to dispute. The phrase 'baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ' has been sometimes thought to describe the candidate's confession of faith rather than the formula by which the Sacrament was conferred. The response ascribed in certain MSS. to the Ethiopian officer at the hour of his Baptism, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God';<sup>1</sup> and the advice of Ananias, bidding Saul of Tarsus to be baptized 'calling on the Name of the Lord,'<sup>2</sup> make it manifest that originally Baptism was accompanied by a profession of faith in the Name of Jesus Christ. One version, again, of S. Peter's instruction to the conscience-stricken throng is 'be baptized on the Name of Jesus Christ';<sup>3</sup> that is, says Alford, 'on confession of that which the Name implies.' Accordingly the expression 'baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ,' might contain a reference not to the Church's formula, but to the candidate's faith.

To others it has appeared more probable that the phrase in question is intended rather to summarise the character of the Christian religion than to describe the contents of the baptismal formula. And certainly such a use of the words would be perfectly intelligible. The whole religion of the Incarnation is implicitly involved in the briefer phrase. But it would not necessarily follow that the baptismal formula omitted the three-fold Name or replaced it by reference to our Lord alone.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Acts viii. 37.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* xxii. 16.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* ii. 38.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the volume on 'Baptism' in the present series, pp. 22, 23; and Notes, p. 226. Also Rackham on Acts ii.



A singular proof of the unreliable character of inferences as to the baptismal formula from the phrase 'baptized in the Name of the Lord' exists in the early second-century document known as the *Didache*. For while in chapter ix. it speaks of 'such as have been baptized in the Name of the Lord,' it expressly orders in an earlier chapter (vii.) that men are to be baptized 'unto the Name of Father and Son and Holy Ghost.' Manifestly, then, to the author of the *Didache* the shorter phrase was but an abbreviation of the Trinitarian formula. And yet, if for any reason he had omitted the longer expression, it might have been inferred that he was only aware of Baptism into the solitary name of Jesus Christ. The inference might have been made, but it would have been entirely erroneous. If by the phrase 'baptized in the Name of the Lord,' the author of the *Didache* means Baptism into the Name of the Holy Trinity, why may not S. Paul<sup>1</sup> and the author of the Acts have employed a like expression in a similar way? If we had no further evidence there would be at least the possibility, and we should be justified in declining to accept the assumption that it is not so. Attention, however, may be called to further indications that the longer baptismal formula was actually in use in the Apostolic time.<sup>2</sup> S. Matthew alone records the phrase; but S. Luke records the words, 'behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you,'<sup>3</sup>—a sentence which involves the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. For the Speaker is the Son, the Person named is the Father, the promise referred to is the Holy Spirit. Thus the allusions in S. Luke and the explicit formula in S. Matthew correspond. Then, again, in S. Luke's report of the conversation between S. Paul and the disciples at Ephesus, the startling admission, 'We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost,'<sup>4</sup> is met by the Apostle with the inquiry, 'Unto what then were ye baptized?'—a question which appears perfectly natural if it were already a Christian axiom that Baptism involved immersion into the Spirit. It was the disciples' ignorance of the relation between Baptism and

<sup>1</sup> Rom. vi. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal of Theological Studies*, July 1905, p. 509.

<sup>3</sup> S. Luke xxiv. 49.

<sup>4</sup> Acts xix. 2, 3.

the Holy Spirit which betrayed to S. Paul the fact that they had never been admitted into the Christian community. But this inquiry of S. Paul may be a reference, not so much to the doctrine of Baptism as to the actual formula then in use. The words, 'Unto what then were ye baptized?' may certainly mean, 'Do you not know that Baptism stands inseparably related with Spirit of God?' but they may also mean, 'Did you not hear the Name of the Holy Spirit in the formula with which you were baptized?' The subsequent record that they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus does not necessarily preclude this construction, as we have already seen in the passages from the *Didache*.

It would not be in the least surprising if maturer study should prove that it never occurred to New Testament writers (S. Luke or S. Paul) that the shorter phrase would ever be taken by their readers as refuting the primitive use of the baptismal formula. S. Cyprian's assurance that S. Peter mentions Baptism in the Name of Jesus Christ not to exclude the Father, but to unite to the Father the Son,<sup>1</sup> may eventually prove to be an instance of superior insight into the real meaning of New Testament phrases.

There is a fearless use of phrases when men speak within a circle of mutual intelligence and sympathy. They employ abbreviations because these will not be misunderstood. For instance, when a learned theologian quite recently, in an elaborate treatise on the Vatican Council, quotes the passage of S. Matthew in the following fashion—'Go teach all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always unto the end of the world'<sup>2</sup>—we do not need to imagine that this rendering was derived from MS. authority in which the baptismal formula was omitted. We regard it as a fearless recognition of the common Christian atmosphere in which writer and reader alike are moving. There is no necessity for an exactitude in quotation which the writer's particular purpose at the moment did not demand. There is no danger

<sup>1</sup> *Ep.* lxxiii.

<sup>2</sup> Vacant, *Études Théologiques sur les Constitutions du Concile du Vatican*, ii. 289.

that he will be misunderstood. It so happens indeed that in another volume<sup>1</sup> of the same work the passage is quoted again, and this time with the full baptismal phrase. And the recurrence of the same text in two such different forms, in a work dated 1895, may suggest the need of caution in inferences from omissions or variations of phrase from a century which certainly possessed other canons than our own on literal exactitude in quotation.

Viewed in another aspect, that of dogmatic development, there is a singular appropriateness in the use of the phrase 'in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost' by our Lord at this precise stage in His instructions of the Apostles. On many previous occasions the three Persons had been already separately revealed by Him. He had constantly spoken of the Father, at times also of the Son, at other times also of the Holy Ghost. Already He had combined the first and second Persons in one phrase, as when He said, 'no man knoweth the Son but the Father.'<sup>2</sup> Already, according to S. John, He had gathered in one the holy Three, just where the natural process of development in teaching would lead Him to such a course, that is to say, in the last instructions before the Passion to the inner circle of the Twelve. What more natural than that He Who said just before He died, 'the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send in My Name,'<sup>3</sup> should have given orders after He rose again that believers should be baptized 'in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.' The final expression not only condenses into perfect unity the teaching which went before it, but also transfers into the region of practical religious experience the dogmatic conceptions of the last hours of His ministry. If He taught as S. John represents, then He also commanded as S. Matthew relates. The one is the natural sequence in the practical order of the other in the intellectual. By way of contrast, let us imagine for an instant that the baptismal formula had occurred in the first mission of the twelve disciples. In that case should we not have instinctively felt that the com-

<sup>1</sup> Vacant, i. 63.

<sup>2</sup> S. Matt. xi. 27.

<sup>3</sup> S. John xiv. 26.

pletion had been strangely placed at the beginning; that the principles of development were being ignored; that the hearers could not possibly have understood or put any reasonable construction on the weighty sentence with its tremendous doctrine; that if they repeated it, as they were told to do, they could only be uttering phrases beyond their present capacity to fathom? But standing where it does, the phrase is natural. It gathers up the teaching of the past. It prepares the way for further development. It is quite natural that one accustomed to Baptism in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, should close a letter with the words 'the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the Communion of the Holy Ghost';<sup>1</sup> or that S. Peter should speak in a single verse of the 'foreknowledge of God the Father, the sanctification of the Spirit, and the sprinkling of the Blood of Jesus,'<sup>2</sup> if he had heard from the risen Master's lips that baptismal co-ordination of the triple Name.

Thus the position of the formula in the Gospel presents a perfectly consistent development of thought. The historic statement harmonises with the intellectual truth.

This appropriateness to its position in the natural course of dogmatic development seems to dispose completely of the strange modern opinion which would regard this great utterance on Baptism as transposed by the editor of the first Gospel from a later period, to which in strict historic accuracy it belongs, into the great forty days. The theory that S. Matthew found this phraseology floating in the practice of the Church about the date of the fall of Jerusalem, and, taking for granted that it must have been in use from the very first, ascribed its origin to the Master Himself, is nothing more than an attempt to explain the imaginary baptismal formula assumed to contain a reference to the Name of Jesus only. But since the existence of such a formula is a pure assumption, the explanatory theory is, to say the very least, superfluous. It does not account for the origin of Baptism in the Name of the Holy Trinity. It acknowledges that the prevalent formula within forty years of the Resurrection was that in the triple Name. But it does not

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> S. Peter i. 2.

explain how the brief phrase which it regards as the original formula ('in the Name of Jesus Christ') had passed away and become replaced by the longer Trinitarian expression. It does not explain how the asserted earlier phrase had so completely vanished that the author of the first Gospel could assume, and the Church in general accept his statement without hesitation, that the Trinitarian formula was that which passed the lips of Christ. Nor does it account for the mysterious fact that this language harmonises exactly with the dogmatic conditions at the period of our Lord's Resurrection. It may not be difficult to imagine words and throw back expressions into an earlier age, but in the development of Apostolic thought it would be difficult beyond description to produce expressions appropriate to a less developed stage—expressions which would not betray themselves as incongruous anachronisms. But if Christ said these words as S. Matthew reports, the normal development maintains its course.

These conclusions may be strengthened by the confirmatory estimate of Dr. Sanday, who speaks of 'the singular convergence of proof that something like the injunction of Matt. xxviii. 19 must have been given, or most probably was given, by our Lord Himself.'<sup>1</sup>

If we trace the baptismal formula in the history of the early Church, it is the Trinitarian phrase of S. Matthew, not the shorter expression of the Acts, which is found to prevail.

Even as early as the *Didache*,<sup>2</sup> S. Matthew's version is already accepted and enjoined upon the Churches in the administration of this Sacrament. The authors of that early treatise did not understand that the risen Christ was giving instruction in the doctrine of Baptism, but rather that He was defining the formula for the Church's use. Tertullian also appeals to the direct command of Christ, and quotes the formula prescribed as S. Matthew records it.<sup>3</sup> Justin Martyr in his *Apology*,<sup>4</sup> writing for the

<sup>1</sup> *Outlines of the Life of Christ*, p. 173; cf. p. 231.

<sup>2</sup> Date about 120.

<sup>3</sup> Tertullian, *Adv. Prax.*, 26; cf. *Dict. Christian Antiq.*, s.v. 'Bapt.' c. 51.

<sup>4</sup> Date about 150. *Apol.* i. 61.

pagan world, gives the formula in slightly expanded terms, but substantially the same. Thus the earliest-known practice of the Church after the Apostolic times testifies to the baptismal use of the Trinitarian formula. Nor is there any evidence of the use of any other form.

The practice of baptizing only in the Name of Jesus Christ occurred in the middle of the third century, and brought upon itself the rebuke of S. Cyprian, who described it as 'done outside the Church and contrary to the Church.'<sup>1</sup> This practice can only be regarded as an eccentricity, most probably based on dogmatic objections to the Church's faith. For we know that it subsequently prevailed among the Eunomians, who, says the historian Socrates, 'do not baptize in the name of the Trinity, but into the death of Christ.'<sup>2</sup> But this was merely an attempt to modify Christian principle in heretical interest. We can well understand that misgivings on the doctrine of the Trinity would be naturally associated with reluctance to employ the formula in which that doctrine finds expression. But we cannot reasonably regard the practice of an isolated few in the third century as any key to explain what was meant in the Acts of the Apostles by Baptism into the Name of the Lord Jesus. We have no ground whatever to suppose the continuous existence of such a practice from Apostolic times. And it is purely arbitrary to imagine such a tradition merely to account for the occurrence in the third century of a practice easily explicable on the ground of dogmatic antipathy.

It seems to us, therefore, clear that the evidence of early Christian history strongly confirms the position assigned to the baptismal formula in S. Matthew's concluding words.

<sup>1</sup> *Ep.* lxxiii.

<sup>2</sup> Socrates, *H. E.* v. 24.



## APPENDIX IV

### BOOKS ON THE RESURRECTION

#### ENGLISH WRITINGS.

Andrewes (Bishop): *Sermons on the Resurrection*. 1606, etc.  
Ditton: *Discourses concerning the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*.  
1712.

Sherlock (Bishop): *Trial of the Witnesses*. About 1750.

Samuel Johnson: *The Resurrection of the Same Body*. 1755.

Gilbert West: *Observations on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*.  
1785.

Lord Lyttelton: *Observations on the Conversion of S. Paul*. 1785.

Horsley (Bishop): *Nine Sermons on the Nature of the Evidence of  
the Resurrection*. 1815.

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Whately (Archbishop): *Essays on Some of the Peculiarities of the  
Christian Religion*. First series, 1846. Essay I., pp. 25-  
119, on Revelation of a Future State. Describes with  
great force how Immortality has been brought to light by  
the Resurrection of Christ.

Moberly: *The Sayings of the Great Forty Days*. 2nd edition,  
1845.

Goulburn (Bishop): *The Resurrection of the Body*. Bampton  
Lectures, 1850. Dwells particularly on its spiritual  
character. A very marked advance on previous English  
treatment of the subject.

Macpherson: *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ*. 1867.

J. J. S. Perowne: *Immortality*. Hulsean Lectures for 1868.

R. H. Hutton: *Theological Essays*. 1871. See especially *The  
Incarnation and the Principles of Evidence*. 3rd edition,  
1888, pp. 241-290.



Westcott (Bishop): *The Gospel of the Resurrection*. 1st edition, 1879. [8th edition, 1898.]

Westcott: *The Revelation of the Risen Lord*.

Milligan: *The Resurrection of our Lord*. 1881. 2nd edition, 1884.

Liddon: *Easter in S. Paul's*. 2 vols. 1885.

Bruce: *Apologetics*. 1893. Especially valuable for its summary of the various substitutes for the Christian explanation of the Resurrection.

R. J. Knowling: *Witness of the Epistles*.

Flint: *Sermons and Addresses*. 1899. See especially pp. 39 ff. for discussion on the place of the Resurrection in the Apostolic teaching.

Latham: *The Risen Master*. 1901.

Robertson (Bishop) in *Critical Questions*. 1903. A lecture on the Evidences of the Resurrection.

See also the principal writings on the XXXIX. Articles (Article iii.), especially Bishop Gibson.

#### WORKS BY GERMAN AND FRENCH WRITERS.

The titles are given in English when the book has been translated.

Krummacher: *The Risen Redeemer*.

Stier: *Words of the Risen Saviour*.

Steinmeyer: *Passion and Resurrection History*.

Bernhard Weiss: *Biblical Theology of New Testament*.

„ *Life of Christ*. Translated in Clark's series.  
See vol. iii.

Beyschlag: Articles in the *Studien und Kritiken* for 1870.

Pruvot: *La Résurrection de Jésus Christ*. 1873.

Godet: *Defence of the Christian Faith*. 1881.

Gess: *Christi Person und Werk*. 1887.

Atzberger: *Die Christliche Eschatologie*. 1890.

Steude: *Die Auferstehung Jesu Christi*. 1893.

Blass: *Die Heilige Schrift und die evangelische Kirche*. 1900.

Loofs: *Die Auferstehungsberichte*. 1900.

Dobschütz: *Ostern und Pfingsten*. 1903,

Articles in the Encyclopædias: especially article 'Resurrection' by Bernard in *Hastings' Dictionary*, and *Auferstehung der Toten* in Hauck-Herzog, 3rd edition. It is singular that in neither case is there a separate article on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is either embodied in the general subject of the Resurrection of the dead, or else considered in the Life of Christ. But in *Hastings* there is no cross-reference. There is in the second edition of Herzog, but not in the third.

## INDEX OF SUBJECTS

- ADAM, First and Second, 209, 219 *sqq.*
- Appearances of Christ, three purposes of, 2-4, 41; two series of, 43 *sqq.* *See also* Body.
- Ascension, the, 51, 52, 56, 180 *sqq.*, 222; teaching of Epistles on, 190; value of, 193 *sqq.*; difficulties of belief in, 202-205; relation to Resurrection, 56, 202.
- Authority, conferred by Christ after the Resurrection, 35, 36, 303; results of, *e.g.* in Baptism, 36-38; necessity of, 38 *sqq.*; importance of, as demanding activity, 41.
- BAPTISM, 36; in 'Triple Name,' 303; in 'Name of Jesus,' 304; 305 *sqq.*
- Belief. *See* Christian Belief.
- Bethany, 184.
- Body, Resurrection of, 10-16, 159 *sqq.*, 203, 266 *sqq.*; spiritualistic series of statements, 160 *sqq.*, 169, 170; materialistic series, etc., 170-173; S. Paul's theory, 91-94, 162 *sqq.*; belief in, among the Jews, 88, 89, 256 *sqq.*; Christ's teaching on, 89, 90. *See also* Grave.
- Burial of Christ, 81-84.
- CÆSAREA, 114.
- Character-drawing in Gospel narratives, 16, 18.
- Christian belief, basis of, 230, 231; influence of, on non-Christians, 276.
- Conversion of S. Paul. *See* S. Paul.
- Critical theories, 44-58, 59 *sqq.*, 66-68, 71-73; 84-87, 88, 98-103, 107 *sqq.*, 133, 141 *sqq.*, 144, 155, 162, 167 *sqq.*, 181 *sqq.*, 193, 293 *sqq.*, 304. *See also* Subjective theories.
- Cyprian, S., 306, 310.
- DAMASCUS, 108, 113, 118, 119, 125, 127, 132, 142.
- Day, Lord's, 76.
- Third, 69 *sqq.*; 104.
- Death, Christian doctrine of, 207 *sqq.*, 211 *sqq.*, 237, 238.
- Didache*, the, 309.
- EMMAUS, 5, 6, 21, 50, 51, 74, 85, 156, 186, 194.
- Epitaphs, Pagan, 268, 269; Christian, 271.
- Eucharist, the, 36, 139, 140.
- Evidence of S. Paul, 75, 95, 97, 106, 118 *sqq.*, 135.
- Evidential purpose of Christ's manifestations, 5 *sqq.*, 176-178.
- GALILEE, 13, 14, 24, 27, 37, 43, 44, etc., 50, 52-59, 104, 138, 139.
- Ghost, the Holy, 305 *sqq.*
- Gospels, the, nature of, 62, 181; how to be studied, 63-66; evidence of, 45-53, 74.
- Grace, doctrine of, its position in Christian thought, 223.
- Grave, the empty, 81 *sqq.*, 104, 174-179; S. Paul and empty grave, 94-97; S. Peter, 96; Jewish acknowledgment of, 97, 98; belief in the Resurrection, etc., 103.
- HISTORY and Religion, attempt to divorce them, 293; impossible,

- 294; Harnack and S. Paul, 298; meaning of facts, 206, 228 *sqq.*, 296 *sqq.*
- IMMORTALITY**, Moses and, 232 *sqq.*, 263, 264; implicit in Old Testament principles, 236 *sqq.*, 257; explicit in later teaching, Isaiah and Immortality, 254; Daniel, 255; modern Jewish thought on Immortality, 259; Paganism and Immortality, 268 *sqq.*; Christianity and Immortality, 263 *sqq.*, 270 *sqq.* *See also* Body, Epitaphs.
- Incarnation, the, 215 *sqq.*, 223, 274, 279.
- Individual, value of the, 235 *sqq.* *See also* Social.
- Instructive purpose of Christ's appearances, 19, 21 *sqq.*; why necessary, 20, 23; appropriateness of the instruction, 34, 35.
- JERUSALEM**, 13, 21, 23, 40, 43, 44, etc., 52-59, 104, 113, 114, 134, 135, 138, 139, 148, 187; Fall of, 308.
- Job, 242, 244 *sqq.*
- John, S., 9, 17, 18, 26, 28-31, 39, 41, 53-55, 70, 82, 86, 95, 138, 148, 181-183, 274.
- Jonah, 70, 76, 153.
- Joseph of Arimathea, 81, 82.
- Judaism and Immortality. *See* Immortality, Body.
- Judas, 39.
- Justin Martyr, 309.
- LUKE**, S., 11, 28, 29-31, 43, 50, 54-56, 62, 64, 81, 82, 85, 111, 114, 183, etc.
- MAGDALENE**, S. Mary, 9, 13, 16, 44, 51, 53, 84-86, 102, 103, 136, 157.
- Manifestations of Christ, the two series in Jerusalem and Galilee, 43 *sqq.*; the forty days allows sufficient time for both, 56, 57. *See also* Appearances, Galilee, Jerusalem.
- Mark, Gospel of, authorship of last twelve verses, 49.
- Mark, S., 43, 48-51, 81, 82, 85, 183, etc.
- Matthew, S., 14, 43-48, 50, 54, 55, 62, 81, 82, 84, 97, 98, 181-183, 305.
- Miracle, Christ's use of, 150 *sqq.*; in accordance with the Divine Method, 149, 150, 214.
- Miraculous Draught, the, 24-26; its relation to the other miraculous draught, 27-32; significance of the two miracles, 32, 33.
- NATHANAEL**, 24.
- Nicodemus, 82.
- PAGANISM**. *See* Immortality, Epitaph.
- Paul, S., 11, 24, 90-92, 95, 97, 106, 110, etc., 156, 162 *sqq.*, 226, 298; conversion of, 107 *sqq.*; evidence for it in Acts, 111 *sqq.*; three different accounts of it in Acts, 114; evidence of S. Paul himself, 118 *sqq.*; external and internal, 127-132; date, 134.
- Peter, S., 9, 14, 16-19, 23-31, 38-40, 50-52, 58, 59, 75, 85, 89, 95, 96, 103, 135, 137, 138, 144, 148, 157, 306; Gospel of S. Peter, 29.
- Pilate, 71, 73, 82, 99, 101, 148, 155-157.
- Presuppositions, importance of, 230, 231; 281 *sqq.*; place of affection in, 287 *sqq.*
- Prophecy, Christ's prediction of His Resurrection, 70; Old Testament prophecy, 77.
- REDEMPTION**, the, 219 *sqq.*
- Resurrection, the, methods of studying it, 1; unexpected by the disciples, 5 *sqq.*; originality of narratives, 10; interval between Resurrection and Ascension, 56; the Resurrection and the empty grave, 103; the Resurrection and Ascension, 202; the Resurrection not at first understood by the Apostles, 226 *sqq.*; the Resurrection part of a system, 278, 284, 292; the Resurrection and Immortality, 272; Resurrection, physical and moral, 224 *sqq.*
- SHEOL**, 242 *sqq.*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>Social view of life, 233 <i>sqq.</i> <i>See</i> Individual.</p> <p>Stephen, S., 112, 113.</p> <p>Subjective theories, 37, 38, 79, 107 <i>sqq.</i>, 140 <i>sqq.</i>, 197.</p> <p>TEMPTATION, the, 151.</p> <p>Testament, Old, and Christian consciousness, 239 <i>sqq.</i> ; prophecy,</p> | <p>77 ; Immortality in. <i>See</i> Immortality.</p> <p>Thomas, S., 6, 13, 24.</p> <p>Transfiguration, the, 217 <i>sqq.</i></p> <p>Trinity, Holy, 307 <i>sqq.</i></p> <p>UNITARIANISM, 227.</p> <p>ZEBEDEE, sons of, 24.</p> |
|--|---|

# INDEX OF BIBLICAL QUOTATIONS

	PAGE		PAGE
Job iv. 7, . . . . .	245	S. Matthew xxviii. 13, . . . . .	97
viii. 6, . . . . .	245	15, . . . . .	97
x. 21, 22, . . . . .	242	16, . . . . .	14, 46
xiv. . . . .	246	17, . . . . .	14
xix. . . . .	248, 249	18, . . . . .	22, 36
Psalms vi. 5, . . . . .	241	19, . . . . .	36
xvi. 6-9, . . . . .	250	S. Mark i. 44, . . . . .	150
10-12, . . . . .	251	v. 37, . . . . .	150
xxxix. 12, . . . . .	210	vii. 33, . . . . .	150
lxxiii. 3, 12, 14, . . . . .	252	viii. 11, . . . . .	151
15, . . . . .	253	11-13, . . . . .	152
22-25, . . . . .	253	23, . . . . .	150
lxxxviii. 10-12 . . . . .	241	31, . . . . .	70
Isaiah, xiv. . . . .	243	ix. 31, . . . . .	70
xxv. 8, . . . . .	254	x. 34, . . . . .	70
xxvi. 14, . . . . .	254	xiv. 54, . . . . .	58
19, . . . . .	242, 255	xv. 29, 30, . . . . .	74
xxxviii. 18, 19, . . . . .	244	44, . . . . .	83
Daniel xii. 2, . . . . .	88, 255	xvi. 1, 2, . . . . .	74
Hosea vi. 2, . . . . .	72, 77	1-8, . . . . .	87
2 Esdras iii. 5, 6, 7, . . . . .	209	7, . . . . .	50, 58
Wisdom i. 13-36, . . . . .	210	8, . . . . .	50
ii. 23, . . . . .	210	9-11, . . . . .	51
Ecclesiasticus xxv. 24, . . . . .	209	14, . . . . .	61
2 Maccabees xii. 44, . . . . .	256	S. Luke xviii. 33-34, . . . . .	70
S. Matthew ix. 30, . . . . .	150	xx. 37, . . . . .	257
x. 28, . . . . .	273	xxiv. 1, . . . . .	74
xi. 4 <i>sqq.</i> . . . . .	154	1-24, . . . . .	87
27, . . . . .	307	6, 11, 12, . . . . .	51
xii. 40, . . . . .	70	12, . . . . .	9
xvi. 11, . . . . .	20	13-53, . . . . .	52
xxvii. 40, . . . . .	74	21, . . . . .	6, 74
63, . . . . .	71, 74	27, . . . . .	21
64, . . . . .	71	39, . . . . .	13
xxviii. 1, . . . . .	74	43, . . . . .	160
1 <i>sqq.</i> . . . . .	87	45, . . . . .	21
7, . . . . .	44	49, . . . . .	305
10-15, . . . . .	45	51, . . . . .	188

	PAGE		PAGE
S. John ii. 19, 21, 22, . . .	71	Acts xxvi. 9, . . .	112
v. 25-28, . . .	90	23, 24, . . .	283
28, 29, . . .	273	10, 11, 12, . . .	113
vi. 62, . . .	182	S. Paul:—	
x. 17, 18, . . .	217	Romans v. 12, . . .	210, 214
xi. 25, . . .	224	vi. 3, . . .	305
xii. 16, . . .	20	4, . . .	93
xiv. 26, . . .	307	viii. 10, . . .	210
xvi. 12, . . .	20	11, . . .	93
xx. 1, . . .	74	34, . . .	191
1-10, . . .	87	x. 9, . . .	93
3, . . .	16	1 Cor. i. 3, 4, . . .	75
xxi. . . . .	24	12, . . .	137
4, . . .	14	xi. 4, . . .	76
5, 6, . . .	25	23, . . .	139
12, . . .	27	54, . . .	94
Acts i. 1, 2, . . .	189	xv. —, . . .	120, 162 <i>sqq.</i>
3, . . .	52	3, 4, . . .	140
6, . . .	20	21, . . .	210
8, . . .	22	xvi. 2, . . .	76
15, . . .	138	2 Cor. ii. 14, . . .	121
22, . . .	192	xii. . . . .	122
ii. 24, . . .	275	xiii. 14, . . .	308
27, 29, . . .	96	Galatians i. 12, 13, . . .	126
31, . . .	225	12-14, . . .	119
32, 33, . . .	275	15, 16, . . .	127
36, . . .	226	18, . . .	40, 134
38, . . .	304	Ephesians iv. 8, . . .	191
iii. 14, 15, . . .	226	Philippians i. 21, 23, . . .	266
vi. 13, 14, . . .	112	iii. 12, . . .	120
viii. 1, . . .	112	1 Thess. iv. 13-18, . . .	268
37, . . .	304	14, . . .	276
ix. . . . .	114	16, 17, . . .	93
1, 2, . . .	113	1 Tim. i. 13, . . .	121
7, . . .	115	ii. 12, . . .	136
x. 40, . . .	75	iii. 16, . . .	191
41, . . .	144	2 Tim. i. 10, . . .	276
xiii. 36, 37, . . .	97	iv. 6-8, . . .	266
xvii. 32, . . .	283	1 S. Peter i. 2, . . .	308
xix. 2, 3, . . .	305	3, 4, . . .	275
xxii. . . . .	114	iii. 21, 22, . . .	192
3, . . .	112	Revelation, i. 5, . . .	275
16, . . .	304	32, 33, . . .	275
xxiii. 6, . . .	282	iv. 8, 11, . . .	265
xxvi. . . . .	114	v. 9, 10, 12, 13, . . .	265
8, . . .	283	xxii. 2, . . .	264



## INDEX OF GENERAL QUOTATIONS

- ATZBERGER, 89.  
Augustine, S., 17.
- BARRY, 232.  
Baur, 109.  
Beyschlag, 42.  
Blass, 86, 187 188.
- CALMES, 17.  
Charles, 237.  
Cheyne (in *Expositor*), 251.  
Chrysostom, S., 121.  
Clemen, 134.  
Cyprian, S., 306, 310.
- DENNEY, 21.  
Dobschütz, 74, 89, 93, 103.
- ELLICOTT, 193.  
Ewald, 243, 246, 248.
- FRIEDLÄNDER, 260.
- GARDNER, P., 270.  
Gess, 137.  
Godet, 17.  
Graetz, 122.
- HARNACK, 228, 279, 293, 294, 298.  
*Hastings' Dict. of Bible*—  
    Mark, Gospel of, 49.  
    Ascension, 196.  
    Resurrection, 264.  
Haustrath, 257.  
Headlam, 272.  
Holtzmann, 72, 87, 90.  
Hort, 49.
- ILLINGWORTH, 286.
- JAMES, 288, 289.  
Joseph, Morris, 261.  
Josephus, 257.  
Jülicher, 110, 111, 182.
- KEIL, 77.  
Keim, 3, 75, 94, 161, 220.  
*Kernel and the Husk* (the), 109, 115.  
Kling (in Lange on *Cor.*), 123.  
Knowing, 122.  
Kruger, 93, 207.
- LATHAM, 17.  
Lightfoot (on *Galat.*), 120.  
Lodge (Sir Oliver, in *Hibbert*), 230.  
Loisy, 25, 26, 29, 55, 295.  
Loofs, 58, 75.  
Lotze, 230, 289.
- MACLAREN (on *Ps.*), 251.  
Maclear, 76.  
Martineau, 3.  
Meyer, 119, 126, 132, 164.  
Moberly, 168, 286, 287, 291, 292.  
Mozley, 288.  
Müller, Max, 232.
- NEANDER, 124.  
Nestle, 183.  
Newman, 290.  
Northcote, 268-271.
- PAGET, 291.  
Pearson, 203.  
Pfleiderer, 89, 109, 110, 127, 130, 166, 255, 257.  
Plummer (on *S. Luke*), 189.  
Pressensé, 67, 68, 75.

RÉVILLE, 88, 103.  
Rohrbach, 95, 98, 99.  
Romanes, 282.

SABATIER, 115, 120, 125, 128.  
Salmond, 88, 256, 264.  
Sanday, 76, 140, 157, 309.  
Schenkel, 88.  
Schleiermacher, 54.  
Schmiedel (in *Encycl. Biblica*), 91,  
92.  
Schwartzkopff, 72, 92, 93.  
Scudamore, 289.  
Skrine, 162, 177, 178.  
Smith, G. Adam (on *Isaiah*), 254.  
Socrates (the historian), 310.  
Stanley (on *Cor.*), 123.  
Stapfer, 43, 44, 87.

Steinmeyer, 35.  
Steude, 58, 59, 87, 98, 103.  
Strauss, 79, 128.  
Swete (on *S. Mark*), 49.

VACANT, 306.

WARD, 290.  
Weiss (Bernhard), 78, 90, 94, 121,  
126, 196.  
Weizsacker, 125.  
Welldon, 244, 270.  
Wendt, 73, 151.  
Wernle, 11.  
Westcott (on *S. John*), 55, 64.

ZELLER, 109, 132.

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